

# MY THIRTY YEARS IN SOUTH KOREA

by Choe Dok Sin

PYONGYANG, KOREA  
1989



### ***A Brief Biography of the Author***

1914 September 17 Born in Uiju, North Pyongan Province.

1936 Graduated from the Central Military Academy in Nanjing, China, and fought in the anti-Japanese war.

1946 May Returned home.

1947–1956 Served in the south Korean army and was placed on the reserve list as a lieutenant general in 1956.

1956–1961 Ambassador to South Viet Nam.

1961–1963 Foreign Minister of south Korea.

1963–1967 Ambassador to West Germany.

1967–1976 Patriarch of the Chondoist faith and concurrently a councillor to the Board for National Unification.

1976–1986 Chairman of Paedal National Council.

1986 September 25 Settled in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

At present Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, Deputy to the Eighth Supreme People's Assembly of the DPRK, Honorary President of the newspaper *Tongil Sinbo*.

# My Thirty Years in South Korea

*Amid the Tragedy of National Division*

Choe Dok Sin

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## Taking Up a Pen Again

Two years have passed since I published my book *The Nation and I* (For the Reunification of the Motherland). The response I received from my readers was very encouraging.

In retrospect now, I can say that the political history of south Korea after August 15 liberation has proved that no dictatorship can hold out for long.

In south Korea, dictatorship experienced many unpleasant vicissitudes and fraudulent politicians who surrounded the administration rose and fell without cease.

I believe that few people had as much experience of the fortune of war and political success as I did in this stinking, turbid stream.

This is because, despite not being among the leading figures in the administration, I held high office at the top level of the administration.

But I did not publish *The Nation and I* (For the Reunification of the Motherland) to boast of my past.

What I wanted to do was to tell my readers of the principles of a patriotic life I have learned for the first time in the latter years of my life.

I take the response of my readers as a token of sympathy with me, a man who had found a new path to follow, and I have received to adopt sincerity, respect and faith, as preached by the Chondoist faith, as the constant principles in my life, and I look forward to a bright future.

By the way, when I called on respected Choe Jong Ryol to offer

her my greetings on New Year's Day last year, she urged me to write a book to set down for posterity that I having held high office under successive dictatorships, felt it necessary to make a confession and denunciation. Encouraged greatly by this I have resolved to take up a pen again.

The feelings of deep emotion and shock that I, a member of the nation, experienced on greeting the 40th anniversary of the historic August 15 liberation also spurred me on to put pen to paper. Although forty years have passed since our nation broke away from the detestable yoke of Japanese imperialist rule, our people have still failed to achieve national reunification and are experiencing great suffering and misery because of the division of the nation.

Of course, there are various reasons for this, but I think no small blame should be ascribed to those who, sunk in the quagmire of anti-communism, have kept their faces turned away from national reunification, as I once did.

In the light of this I wanted to make some further remarks so that those of my fellow countrymen who are now following the same path that I once took may leave the wrong path as soon as possible and take the right course for the nation.

I realize that this will throw light on my unsavoury past and wash the dirty linen of the nation in public, but, even so, I am urged by a sense of national obligation.

So, I decided to publish this book as a companion volume to *The Nation and I* (For the Reunification of the Motherland).

From this book my readers will learn about the long period in which the process of my cognition was misguided and about the reversed patriotism and blind nationalism pursued in his own way by an ordinary man who cherished patriotic feelings within a large structure that corrupted human nature and defiled the national spirit.

Different, opposing views are liable to appear in the conditions where those who fawn on outside forces assume power within a structure rigged up by foreign forces and have power of life and death over the people.

I make bold to write a book, encouraged by the sage's saying, "He who commits a fault and does not repent of it is wrong."

I hope that my readers will give further encouragement to the author, who took the path of true national life, having repented of his fault-ridden past.

August 1985

Choe Dok Sin

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# **Did Liberation Really Come?**

August 15 is the day when all the Korean people are carried away with emotion on recalling that the country threw off the Japanese imperialist yoke and won its independence.

At the time of August 15 liberation I was abroad, yet my excitement was enormous. I thought that now I was no longer a member of a ruined nation and had become the subject of a full-fledged, independent country.

My heart was filled with hope and ambition and I felt as if enough strength was gathering in my body to move mountains and fill in the sea.

I indulged in sweet reverie about my liberated motherland and my future. A democratic republic would doubtlessly be founded in the independent motherland. How many men would be needed in different fields to make the motherland prosperous?

I was impatient to return to the homeland at the earliest possible date.

But I heard talk about the line of latitude 38 degrees north being a line of demarcation with the Soviet army stationed north of it and the US army south of it, and that a US military administration had been established in south Korea with the surrender of the Japanese army.

I felt somehow estranged from the Soviet army stationed in the north, I knew not why, and on the other hand, I found in the US army in the south something acceptable, probably because I had once fought with US soldiers against the Japanese army in the border areas of India and Burma. Moreover, my father had already returned to south Korea, so I naturally opted to return there.

However, on returning home I found the situation in the homeland far from my expectation.

The country which greeted me was not sovereign and independent.

I found that the people who lorded it there were, as before, foreigners. I was stunned by this. I asked myself time and again "Has liberation truly come to this land?"

I was shocked and gripped by frustration and writhed in distress and agony.

Then I, as a man with a long military career, adapted myself to the new circumstances and once again enlisted in the army.

I did not seriously consider whether the road I had chosen would have any significance for the glorious life of our nation or for my own sake, viewing matters in the light of the socio-political background and conditions prevailing in those days. Guided only by a vague nationalist sense of moral obligation that I, an old career soldier, could not eat the bread of idleness in the liberated homeland, I became a soldier again. But I did not realize that this would determine the course of my life.

## Disillusionment

### *Inhospitable Port Pusan*

It was a fine day. It was a really balmy spring day. The sea rippled. My heart filled with soaring pride. I indulged in reverie, looking far into the sky over the horizon in the direction in which, supposedly, was my motherland.

The motherland I had never forgotten awake or asleep! How I longed for my motherland!

When we land at Pusan, let our troop of over 3,000 hold a street parade! Then, let's go straight up to Seoul and hold a triumphant parade for our return. Young officer Choe Dok Sin with chest struck out and a solemn look on his face will be at the head of the troops marching in fine array, shaking the earth. I am fully entitled to lead the parade.

As for those 3,000 fellow countrymen, they had been forcibly drafted by the Japanese imperialists in the name of conscription, student soldiers, fatigue parties and "voluntary corps" and had crossed and recrossed the deathline on the Chinese mainland, suffering inhuman treatment. After the surrender of the Japanese troops to the Chinese army and its disarmament, these fellow countrymen were sent to POW camps together with Japanese troops, but were set free through the offices of me, an officer in the regular Chinese army. They had come together from Guangdong Province and Hainan Island and formed the "Korean soldiers'

intensive training corps” before setting off for home.

On board the ship bound for their homeland as is usual with people who have gathered from different places, they talked with pride about their birthplaces and their plans and hopes after returning home. Some suggested getting in contact later, in memory of having shared the same fate. All this was music to my ears. I again indulged in reverie.

The applause and cheers of the masses would shake Seoul, the capital. Their eyes would all be focussed, on me, marching at the head of troops. I would be delighted by this. I would square my shoulders.

I was awakened from my reverie by people calling my name. It was Pak and Mun who had been in charge of the medical team of the Japanese army, they had both been put in a POW camp. After being released, they joined the intensive training corps and spared no pains to prevent contagious diseases and cure a variety of ailments.

They urged me to make a decision. The problem was cases of cholera among our party.

Several cases of cholera occurred among our party in Guangdong, China. Some of them had died on the repatriation ship due to the medical equipment being inadequate, the supply of medicine being insufficient and the conditions on board being unhealthy.

They maintained that if we landed in such circumstances the infectious disease might be spread to the homeland, so the patients should be isolated in a hospital ship and the other passengers should land after a certain period of time had elapsed. They were in charge of medical care, so their opinion was quite right and I was deeply moved by their concern, thinking it a manifestation of their patriotism.

Nevertheless, I could not readily comply with their request because of the strong yearning of the more than 3,000 repatriates. Quite a few of them were people who had been captured suddenly in the street or in the field and taken away, and this had been a terrible experience for them, hearing the wails of their parents, wives and children. I knew only too well their feelings on returning

home after narrowly escaping death, looking forward eagerly to reunion with their families. Besides, I noticed that they were complaining openly about Pak and Mun's suggestion and the atmosphere was worrying.

In my mind two loves—love for one's blood relations and love for one's nation—were at loggerheads for a while. At last the major love overcame the minor one. I decided to comply with Pak and Mun's request. I had to persuade my compatriots, exercising my authority as the head of the corps. Land loomed over the horizon before I knew it. The land of my native country was in view.

There was a succession of shouts of joy on deck. Before our eyes the port of Pusan on the southernmost tip of the homeland slowly drawing near. Hot tears rolled down my cheeks. It was May 1, 1946. It was 16 days since we had left Guangdong, China, on April 16.

We lay off shore for 18 days, unable to land at Pusan.

We got in touch with the port authorities and sent the patients to a hospital ship, but our ship had to remain isolated. I spent several tedious, gloomy days with the single thought that the infectious disease should not be spread to the motherland (I should like to call this patriotism).

On May 18 I was summoned by the port command, the office of the US military administration. Although in my book *The Nation and I* (For the Reunification of the Motherland) I referred to the disgusting treatment I received that day, I cannot help recalling it again as a typical and clear example of the character of the US military administration which lorded it over south Korea after liberation.

Served with a summons from the port command, I assumed I was to receive special treatment and left the ship, soothing my beating heart. But I was taken aback by what happened to me and the treatment I received was quite unexpected. I, a colonel, was rather interrogated than interviewed by a US master sergeant, an American-born Japanese, and was deprived of my revolver and 500 US dollars.

My blood surged in my veins and I writhed in agony, not knowing where to vent my wrath.



I returned to the ship only to find it empty. The one returnee who was still there waiting for me told me that during the hour I was being interrogated at the port command, GIs had flocked to the ship and made over 3,000 compatriots leave the ship and disperse. I was shocked and felt a strong sense of frustration. My dream of a triumphant parade for our return was shattered to smithereens. I was now not a triumphant but a defeated officer without soldiers, far from being a victorious general.

The authorities of the US military administration did not touch my military uniform, but took away my revolver and 500 US dollars. This meant that they were treating me as a refugee returning home, and not as an officer in Chinese military uniform.

Oh! Is this the way to receive a man who has risked his life in the war against the Japanese, disarmed Japanese troops after their defeat and returned home at the head of 3,000 of his compatriots, having saved them after they had been forcibly drafted by the Japanese imperialists and had suffered every manner of misery in the face of death?

Where is my homeland? Has the homeland today been liberated? My thoughts were thrown into utter confusion.

The only clear facts were that the port of Pusan had received this Choe Dok Sin, who had returned full of joy and hope, too coolly and that the US military administration had subjected him to intolerable insults.

It was evidently the authorities of the US military administration that had maltreated and insulted me.

Why did they do so? I asked myself and tried hard to find an answer. I could not find an immediate answer. I have been able to find an answer to this question only in my twilight years, after following a course of life that was full of vicissitude.

The reason was that the policy of the US army stationed in south Korea was to try to form a pro-American indigenous armed force and not to recognize any other soldiers.

I became keenly aware of this when the south Korean army was formed.

*Where Is the Seal of the Provisional Government?*

Having received such an enormous mental shock in Pusan, I had to go quickly up to Seoul. If I went to Seoul I would meet my family, I thought. I believed that if I could meet my father (Choe Dong O) and father-in-law (Ryu Dong Yol), who had returned home the previous year, I would hear news of the “provisional government” and details of the situation in the country.

As is known, the “provisional government” was set up by the champions of independence who had been exiled abroad after the “Japanese annexation of Korea.” Although it was never accepted by the Chinese government as it should have been and had been in no position to fly its own flag, it had offered a ray of hope to the compatriots at home and abroad who were suffering the sorrow of being stateless people.

I was particularly concerned about the “provisional government” because my father had been its minister of justice and my father-in-law, chief of staff of its high command.

Frankly speaking, at that time I pinned great hopes on the “provisional government.”

Although the US military administration now exercises real power in south Korea, it will be a passing phenomenon. As the US forces are stationed here supposedly to receive the surrender of the Japanese army, once they have accomplished their mission, they will have nothing to do and there will be no reason for them to remain here.

Then the sovereign power in this land will fall into the hands of our nation. And the seal and authority of the “provisional government” will be passed to the government of the newly independent country, whatever form it may take. This thought further urged me to go to Seoul.

Thus I, as a stripling uninitiated in politics, went to Seoul, the centre of the political life of south Korea. It was May 19. I found my family living in a small house in 6 Street, Uljiro, which had previously been enemy property. It was not a large house for the size of my family, but was my family’s dear home which had been acquired through the good offices of Pak Hyon Uk.

I spent some time in assessing the situation. Prompted by curiosity, I began by enquiring into the whereabouts of the

“provisional government.” But it no longer existed. The leading figures of the “provisional government” had certainly returned home, but its officers could be found nowhere. This was because the US military government would not allow any independent institution to represent our nation except the US military administration.

After World War II, although Japan had fought against the Allies and been defeated, the United States left the emperorship intact and enforced indirect rule by making the emperorship subject to the MacArthur command, while in south Korea, a liberated country, it did not allow the Korean people to form any independent movement and maintained direct rule through the US army which occupied south Korea, and the US army behaved like an army of occupation. Proclamation No. 1 of the so-called general headquarters of the allied forces in the Pacific was issued, the effect of which was that the MacArthur command held supreme power over south Korea and that the official language would be English.

When they entered south Korea on September 8, 1945 the US army authorities had adopted an unfriendly attitude towards the south Korean people. They ignored the welcoming delegation from the preparatory committee for nation-building which had gone as far as Inchon to greet them. In addition, when some men who had once been Japanese police under the government-general and were patrolling the port, fired on a welcoming group of trade unionists active in the Inchon area who were marching towards the quay, causing several casualties, a US army officer, on landing, actually justified the murder as a police action.

The manner of entry of the leading figures of the “provisional government” returning from Chongqing was inappropriate. The US military administration allowed them to return home in a private capacity and in several groups.

The leading members of the “provisional government” returned carrying the seal of the “provisional government” from Chongqing, but did not know what to do with it. The US military administration did not want to recognize it.

If one examines the matter closely, the recognition or non-recognition of the “seal of the provisional government” was not the concern of the US military administration, but depended solely on

the will of the Korean nation because it was directly related to the question of power in our liberated country. Moreover, the US army had launched military operations against Japan in cooperation with our liberation army on the Chinese mainland prior to August 15 liberation. But now that the Japanese army had surrendered, the United States would not allow our people to establish any form of independent movement. In this situation, the United States' ulterior design against our nation was beyond my comprehension.

I felt a vague distrust of the United States, but my political vision and ideological awareness in those days were inadequate for laying bare its true colours. If at that time I had had political intelligence and a keen eye enough to analyze the real nature of the US military administration which exercised absolute authority over the destiny of the south Korean people, the United States' policy towards south Korea and its view of the south Korean people, I might have realized why the prospects of independence for our nation were obscure; then the course of my life might have been different.

At that time, however, I believed that the independence of our nation would be achieved at some time since there was such an international guarantee as the Cairo Declaration, to which the United States was a signatory. But I did not yet realize that the phrase "in due course," by which the date of granting independence to Korea was identified in the Cairo Declaration, would be interpreted in so ambiguous a manner.

In his article in the 1947 June issue of *National Geography* Lieutenant General Hodge, commander of the US army in south Korea, wrote: The phrase "in due course" is very difficult to interpret. It may be interpreted to mean "in a few days," "in a few weeks," "in a few years," or "in tens of years." But most of the Koreans interpret this phrase as meaning "in a few days" and long for the granting of independence; this is creating problem.

From Lieutenant General Hodge's remarks it can be clearly realized that the United States was by no means favourably disposed towards the independence of Korea. I did not understand why the request for prompt independence meant creating problems for the United States; was I mistaken to believe that August 15 had been the day our nation had won its independence? I could not help being disillusioned with the developments following liberation. My

disillusionment could be ascribed not only to the fact that the seal of the “provisional government” was ignored, but also to the general political situation in south Korea in those days.

I was highly displeased when I heard that a junior officer, not a Korean but an American first lieutenant at that, regarded the political situation prevailing in south Korea after August 15 liberation as a chessboard and handled our veteran patriots like chess pieces.

First Lieutenant Birtch, a young officer from Ohio State, United States, came to south Korea in early December 1945. At first he served as speech writer for Lieutenant General Hodge, then he was promoted to his political adviser, an influential post allowing him to mould the political situation in south Korea like wax.

On May 22, 1946, at about the time when I entered Seoul, he gathered together Kim Gyu Sik, Won Se Hun, Ryo Un Hyong, Hwang Jin Nam and others in his house in Sindang-dong, Songdong Ward, to prepare the script for the Right-Left collaboration drama. It is only natural that this political scheme, the so-called “Right-Left collaboration,” proposed by First Lieutenant Birtch should end in failure, but even so it was lamentable. It was quite beyond my understanding why we were not allowed to build an independent country in our own land for ourselves and why a US army first lieutenant decided matters.

A succession of incredible events were to take place subsequently. I thought with regret that although the “provisional government” in exile could not be accepted as the genuine government of the new homeland after liberation, its devoted patriotic service for national liberation after the loss of the country should be appreciated at any rate. But this was a vain hope.

The “provisional government,” which had held out for many difficult years in a corner of the Chinese mainland, ended its existence, given the cold shoulder after returning home.

### *In the Gloomy Days*

My grandparents and the other members of my family had come over to south Korea as well. So our family, comprising four generations, felt considerable inconvenience in the small house in 6

Street, Uljiro, which had once been held by the enemy. So we looked far and wide for a larger house and found with difficulty an enemy property suitable for our family in 5 Street, Uljiro, but I did not know how difficult the procedures for moving house were. We moved to a new house after six months of difficulties.

However, some people who claimed “rights by connection” owned not only several large, luxury homes but also factories and enterprises, previously enemy property which had been “transferred” without difficulty. As for the “rights by connection,” no one had as deep a connection with enemy property as the pro-Japanese elements who had clung to the Japanese in the past. So in south Korea only the pro-Japanese elements were to prosper, even after the Japanese imperialists had pulled out. This upset me, but I could do nothing because I was a mere nothing in the eyes of the almighty US military administration.

I was bored by being cooped up indoors doing nothing. So I stirred myself to leave the house, but what greeted my eyes and ears in the streets was all pitiful. People were doing whatever they could to make a living in face of the economic chaos which was growing worse as the days went by.

Above all the question of food was the biggest headache. A clamour for rice was heard on all sides.

The US military administration was in no position to resolve the grave problem and even blamed the south Korean people for complaining about the lack of rice. In a press interview, US civil administrator Major General Lirch asked why south Korean people wanted to live only on rice instead of eating apples and eggs. When I thought that a man who saw things in this way was occupying the highest office in the civil administration, I could not help laughing harshly.

Production was virtually at a standstill and in the shops it was goods abandoned by the Japanese imperialists and the PX goods of the US army that were being offered for sale. A large quantity of the Japanese colonial money, the source of which was unknown, was put into circulation, and this caused galloping inflation. Only the number of shops selling alcohol increased. Bars and cabarets appeared one or two doors away from one another as well as numerous luxury restaurants. Dance halls were opened and dances

began.

The social atmosphere grew gloomy. Rapes committed by US soldiers occurred in rapid succession. US soldiers would chase after our young women in the streets in broad daylight, waving “Korean banknotes” abandoned by the Japanese imperialists. When I returned home from a stroll in the street having witnessed these deplorable scenes, I would shut myself in my room and feel ever more depressed.

But certain people became my companions in conversation and helped open my eyes on the world. One of them was Kim San, whom I had known previously in China, and the other was Choe Nung Jin, with whom I became acquainted after my return home.

Whenever he met my father, Kim treated me, who was many years his junior, kindly and deigned to listen to the story of my personal experiences. When on one occasion I accompanied him on a tour of the provinces, he listened attentively on the train to my humble narrative of the military service I, as a Chinese officer, had rendered during the operation to annihilate the Japanese troops in the border area between India and Burma and, looking at me with approving eyes, encouraged me to write an account of my experience. As I had never thought of such an idea before, Kim’s advice was stamped on my memory and convinced me, when the opportunity arose, to publish the book *The Bloody Anti-Japanese War Fought in India and Burma*. Later Kim was active as an assemblyman, and I supported him strongly.

I cherish very warm memories of Choe Nung Jin, too. Choe Dae Hyok, his eldest brother, carried out liaison missions for our independence movement while running the Sammin chemist’s shop in Nanjing, China. Because of this he frequented our home after father’s return to Korea.

Choe Nung Jin was an upright man who always opposed injustice. He met his death in tragic circumstances as a result of his fortitude in adversity.

Choe who was on the preparatory committee for nation-building which was headed by Ryo Un Hyong, held the office of head of the police investigation bureau under the US military administration. At that time in September 1946, a popular uprising broke out in

Taegu. On October 23 after the uprising had been put down south Korea-US talks were held, attended by representatives of the US military administration and by Ryo Un Hyong and Dr. Kim Gyu Sik as representatives of the Right-Left collaboration committee. The head of the police department of the military government, Cho Byong Ok, and the head of the municipal police, Chang Taek Sang, were also among those attending. The head of the police investigation bureau, Choe Nung Jin, was summoned to give testimony and to supply an account of the Taegu popular uprising.

The US military administration regarded the popular uprising as a disturbance incited by Left-wing forces, but in fact it was a result of the tyranny of the US military administration, the violence of whose police exceeded that under Japanese imperialist rule, and also as a result of the forced delivery of rice, which was continued after liberation.

Choe gave testimony, boldly laying bare these facts. Choe explained the feelings of the people towards the police, and revealed the fact that the policemen of the military administration were former Japanese stooges who had previously harassed our nation and had wormed their way into the police force of the military administration because it provided them with shelter and that most of them had come over from north Korea, having been unable to find sanctuary there. He said that the police raided farmhouses to search for and confiscate rice, and that where the farmers resisted them, they were marched off, handcuffed and then beaten and tortured at will; he stressed that in this situation south Koreans had no choice but to turn communist.

He went on to reveal that Cho Byong Ok and Chang Taek Sang had both persistently refused his proposal to employ nationalists as policemen.

Ryo Un Hyong demanded that Cho Byong Ok and Chang Taek Sang be dismissed in the name of the chairman of the Right-Left collaboration committee, but the US military administration paid him no heed. Ryo Un Hyong and Choe Nung Jin paid bitterly for this, suffering violent death. The circumstances of Ryo Un Hyong's assassination are well known, but how Choe met his end lies buried in obscurity and is not widely known.

Choe was dismissed from the police because of the testimony he



gave. He stood against Syngman Rhee for election for the constituent assembly on May 10, 1948 in the Tongdaemun A constituency, but he was arrested without warrant and his candidacy was cancelled. Afterwards it fared ill with Choe and during the June 25 war he was shot to death without trial by the special order of Syngman Rhee. It was a virtual assassination by the dictatorship.

What a terrible thing! He made no compromise with injustice, even though he knew that it might be disastrous for him, and he lived according to his national conscience in the circumstances in which he found himself.

## The Founding of The Army and My Involvement

### *The Army as a Shelter for the Pro-Japanese*

Building a new country after throwing off the Japanese imperialist yoke was the major concern of our whole nation, and I was particularly interested in the founding of our army.

This was because of not only my attitude as a career soldier but also my full awareness that there was no powerful self-defence force to guarantee our national sovereignty, this being one of the major reasons why we had been deprived of state power by the Japanese imperialists.

My father-in-law, Ryu Dong Yol, had been an officer in the former Korean army. The forced disbandment of our army by the Japanese imperialists caused him and Li Gap and Ro Baek Rin sorrowful indignation, so they together launched a volunteer movement. Later he devoted himself to the anti-Japanese independence movement abroad and held the office of Chief of Staff of the high command under the “provisional government” until his return home after August 15 liberation. I well knew how, during the tens of years he had spent in hardship abroad, my father-in-law had nurtured the ardent desire to build up a strong national army capable of achieving national independence.

I, too, wanted to become a soldier in the modern regular army of

our nation. To be more precise, I flattered myself that I should and was able to play the pivotal role in founding the national army of our newly emerging country together with my superiors, alongside whom I had fought in the anti-Japanese war for many years.

However, the situation in south Korea after my return home following liberation was greatly at variance with my hopes and expectations. If a genuine national army was to be founded, it would be an army which could defend the dignity and sovereignty of the nation from any encroachment from outside, embracing those who love the country and the people, and should be founded by the nation's efforts and according to its will.

However, the process by which the army was being founded in south Korea was far from meeting these requirements.

In the first place, the army was being founded not by our own people but by the authorities of the US military administration, with pro-Japanese traitors to the nation forming its backbone instead of patriotic people. It was evident that such an army would not serve the people and could only be the tool of foreign forces. The process by which the army was founded clearly showed this.

On November 13, 1945 the so-called Constabulary Command was inaugurated on the initiative of Li Ung Jun, Kim Sok Won, Paek Hong Sik, Sin Tae Yong, Yu Jae Hong, Chae Byong Dok, Chong Il Gwon, Paek Son Yop, Li Hyong Gun and Kim Baek Il. These were ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies who had strutted about wearing a Japanese sword at their side. Their intention was to push forward preparations for founding the army in their own way.

The US military administration covertly and overtly helped them in their activities and the military government issued decrees to give them authority to act; at the same time the activities of our "provisional government" were banned. On November 23, according to a decree of the US military government, the inauguration of the "Defence Department of the US Military Administration in South Korea" was held with the participation of more than 60 young and middle-aged ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies. This was how the founding of the army was begun and how its basis was laid.

The US military administration opened the “English military school” in Sodaemun on December 5 the same year. Won Yong Dok was appointed the first head of the school thanks to the good offices of Li Ung Jun, Li Hyong Gun, Chae Byong Dok and Kim Sang Gyom.

The “English military school” was an establishment designed to make the ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies master English through intensive training and then receive a commission. It was, so to speak, a pool for training the commanding officers for a native army who would execute the military policy of the US military administration. The school was moved to Taenung on February 27, 1946. It taught English exclusively and, on March 15, produced 200 graduates for the first regiment. Later it became the parent body of the military academy.

In addition, the constabulary and its military academy were officially founded in January and May 1946 respectively.

There was certain reason when the army was founded prior to the establishment of the government in south Korea.

The political requirements of the US military administration were to form the national army in south Korea before anything else. Those eligible for mercenaries were those who had served as officers in the Japanese and Manchukuo armies, betraying the nation. In the eyes of the US military administration they were ready to serve an outside force just as they had done previously. Having once betrayed the country, they would make no distinction between Japan and the United States as long as they benefited. In the new situation they were fully prepared to respond to the call of the US military administration. The interview given to Li Ung Jun, a former high-ranking officer in the Japanese army, by the US military government is a clear indication of the situation in those days.

In early January 1946 Colonel Champan and Colonel Ago of the national defence department of the US military government summoned Li Ung Jun. They had a serious matter to discuss, but it was easily settled. The two sides quickly reached a mutual understanding.

“Building up the army should be promoted rapidly. We hope that you will lend us your support.”

“I once served in the Japanese army. I should like to lie low for the time being in view of the feelings of the nation.”

“Because you once served in the Japanese army, does that mean you can’t work for your liberated country?”

“All right. You’ve convinced me.”

It goes without saying that on hearing of this the ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies, who were on their best behaviour, sent up cries of joy. In this way ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies were banded together under the national defence department of the US military government.

After his interview with the authorities of the US military government Li Ung Jun was officially appointed adviser to its national defence department, this being the first time such a thing had ever happened in Korea.

Li Ung Jun who had married the only daughter of Li Gap and behaved as his son, had been sent by the old Korean government to the Japanese military academy to study. The Japanese annexation of Korea happened while he was at the military academy, but he stayed on and graduated before serving in the Japanese army, in which he became a colonel.

His disposition was gentle and he got on with people, so he was popular among the ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies as their superior officer. That was why, after liberation, ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies frequented his house in the vicinity of Koryo University. Realizing this, the US military government authorities understood that Li Ung Jun would serve them well in founding the army.

In addition, the US military government reorganized its national defence department to form the united defence department and appointed as its head Ryu Dong Yol, the former chief of staff of the high command under the “provisional government.” This was intended only as a shield to ward off the spearhead of national feelings against the constabulary being founded by ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies. The founding of the army proceeded under the guidance of the former Japanese and Manchukuo army officers, in accordance with the policy of the US military administration. Ryu Dong Yol had no one to support his

aspirations and views.

After the official founding of the constabulary on January 15 with Ryu Dong Yol as the head of the united defence department, an armed force of a company or larger was formed in each provincial seat by Won Yong Dok, Chae Byong Dok, and Li Hyong Gun and other ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies.

As for their equipment, the US army supplied them with rifles taken from the defeated Japanese army. In June 1946 one regiment was formed in each province, that is, eight regiments in all. Under the united defence department, the general headquarters of the south Korean constabulary was set up to command these regiments and a coast guard whose predecessor had been the liberation corps, was officially formed under the coast guard bureau. An air force, too, was organized. Of course, the US military government authorities gave priority to building up ground forces.

With the formation of parent bodies and the increase in their strength, the demand for commanding officers grew. However, the demand was easily met. Men returning home from the Pacific islands after the defeat of the Japanese army found their way into the army through the good offices of their former classmates, juniors or seniors at the Japanese military academy like Li Ung Jun, Li Hyong Gun and Chae Byong Dok, who constituted the backbone of the united defence department.

Some of those, such as Chong Il Gwon, who had served in the Manchukuo army hastily came over to south Korea through north Korea, while others, such as Park Jung Hee, had joined the liberation army briefly, their way home blocked by the civil war in China, and wormed their way into the army thanks to the good offices of Won Yong Dok, Chong Il Gwon, Paek Son Yop, Kim Baek Il and others who had been appointed to important posts in the army after their return home.

Control over all personnel affairs was, of course, in the hands of American officers in the US military government. In those days the American adviser to the the united defence department was Colonel Preis and that to the constabulary was Captain Hausman.

At that time Li Ung Jun was adviser to the united defence department and his son-in-law Li Hyong Gun was chief of its staff,

while in the constabulary Chong Il Gwon assumed the post of chief of staff. American officers managed personnel affairs in line with the desires of these pro-Japanese elements and national traitors from the Japanese and Manchukuo armies. As a result, the personnel administration of the army was done virtually as those who had been in the Japanese and Manchukuo armies wanted.

The way ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies were accorded rank was preposterous. The US military government gave priority to veterans who had served in the Japanese army. It gave them the rank they stated they had held in the Japanese army.

“What was your last rank in the Japanese army?”

“I was a captain.”

“All right. You’re a captain from today.”

“And you?”

“I was a major.”

“All right. You’re a major.”

This was no exaggeration. This utterly ridiculous practice became a mockery worldwide and I myself felt ashamed. An NHK broadcast from Japan once aired a satire after the establishment of the south Korean government in 1948.

A: “What was your rank at the end of the war?”

B: “I was a major.”

A: “Really? Then go to the next door. You, no doubt, will become the chief of the general staff.”

A: “And you?”

B: “I was the skipper of a cargo boat.”

A: “If you go to the next door, you will become defence minister.”

This was bitter ridicule directed at the situation in south Korea where Chae Byong Dok, a former major in the Japanese army, was accorded the rank of brigadier general and made the chief of the general staff and Sin Song Mo, the former captain of an English cargo boat, was appointed defence minister.

However, the US military government authorities had no cause to grudge them their badges of rank as long as they helped build up

a national army that would serve to carry out US policy.

In the political atmosphere created by the US military administration those who had previously served Japan became animated, thinking they were visited by good fortune. Those who had been calmly watching the situation develop entered military service, vying with each other for rank. Not only ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies but also former Japanese policemen, secret-service men and the special agents of the Kwantung army joined the army.

As a result, the army became virtually a shelter for those with a record of pro-Japanese activity and national betrayal. A special committee for the investigation of undemocratic activity was formed and clamoured for the trial of pro-Japanese elements and traitors to the nation, but its clamour fizzled out. As for the ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies, the committee made no mention of even considering their cases. It was due to the fact that they were greatly favoured by the US military government authorities that they were left alone.

Thus, even those who had committed the heavy crime of pro-Japanese activity and traitorous acts could automatically evade punishment and felt relieved as long as they were on the army list.

It was extremely doubtful whether such an army could be called a national army for defending the nation. What became of the army later is evidence of this.

### *A Naïve Protest*

It greatly injured my patriotic feelings that ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies played the most important role in founding the army, undertaken under the auspices of the US military administration. I, who had fought the Japanese, rifle and sword in hand, felt my self-respect trampled underfoot.

Formerly, in his "Declaration on the Korean Revolution," Sin Chae Ho had asserted that Japanese imperialism was the enemy threatening the existence of the Korean nation and declared that "We are fully justified in attacking and destroying Japan."

Men who, clinging to the Japanese imperialists, the "enemy

threatening the existence of the Korean nation,” and gratefully receiving military rank and dirty stipends from the Emperor of Japan, had barbarously slaughtered their innocent compatriots in the van of the so-called punitive operations against the anti-Japanese independence fighters, were playing the principal role in founding the army of the motherland that had been liberated from Japanese imperialism. How could anyone understand this?

Those who had served the enemy of our nation could themselves be nothing other than the enemy of our nation. The fate of the nation could not be entrusted to such people. They well deserved punishment, like the Japanese imperialists. Consequently my national conscience did not allow me to play a role in founding the army, an army in which these enemies bossed it. My personal feelings were also involved. The ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies were clearly my enemies because I had taken part in the anti-Japanese war, and we had fought each other at the front with guns levelled.

Major in the Japanese army Li Ryong Mun, who had fought on the Nanyang Islands and later at the Indo-Burmese front during the Pacific War, was enemy to me, Choe Dok Sin, who had fought at the Indo-Burmese front. When afterwards I was summoned to give testimony, having been involved in the Kochang incident, Li Ryong Mun, as the military trial judge, interrogated me. It was a lamentable twist of fate and it caused my blood to course through veins.

I had been stationed on Mt. Duyubdu in Guizhou Province, in a Chinese troop under the command of General Sun Liren, before leaving for the Indo-Burmese front. Later I discovered that Captain Li Hyong Gun of the Japanese artillery had fought in Guizhou Province. It turned out that it was only by a short time that I missed a baptism of his artillery fire.

But after his return home Li Hyong Gun, a former captain in the Japanese army, was appointed to a higher post than I, a former colonel in the Chinese army, and always looked down on me.

In this situation how could pro-Japanese activities be condemned and what was the worth of having fought Japan at the risk of one's life?



Although I don't know whether I fought them at other fronts or not, it was a stark fact that the ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies were hostile to me, once again finding themselves in the enemy camp, confronting me.

To stand in the same rank with them in the same uniform as theirs was to humble my pride.

I felt bitter towards the US military administration. Was I not a comrade-in-arms who had fought on the side of the Allied Forces? It was beyond my comprehension why the administration set store by those who had sided with the enemy and pushed aside those who, like me, had fought with the allies against the Japanese army.

I could not understand the handling of affairs by the US military administration. I tried to take a favourable view. I construed it in a way that it was an outcome of the trickery of the ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies and that the US military government authorities were not fully acquainted with the situation and were taken in by their trickery.

So, I sent a letter to the US military government in the hope that it would be able to form a correct understanding of the situation and put to rights its policy of founding the army with pro-Japanese elements and national traitors as the central figures.

In this letter I pointed out that the army was being formed along the wrong lines, mentioning a few figures trusted by the US military administration and using data to prove that they had worked for the Japanese and committed crimes against the nation and that they had taken part in operations against the Allied Forces in particular, and stressed the need to promote the founding of the army with able patriotic soldiers who had fought against the Japanese.

In retrospect, I was naive, if I am to be kind to myself, but in fact this was an utter absurdity. As a matter of course, the US military government did not react to my written protest and ignored it.

In fact, the US military government authorities had not been taken in by the ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies though not being acquainted with the situation, as I had thought in giving them the benefit of the doubt, but acted in this way despite being fully aware of everything.

As I felt whenever the promotion of officers was officially

announced later, the US military government authorities seemed to treat lightly or neglect officers who had served in the Chinese or liberation army, as if they were incompetent, while recognizing the authority of the ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies simply because they had received military education from the Japanese militarists. Perhaps it was people with an anti-Korean background who were more important to the US army.

Anyhow, it was much later in my life that I came to realize, to understand, the abnormal situation in the world politics where yesterday's foe is a friend today because it is in the national interest. At that time I was displeased with the US military government authorities that favoured those who, serving in the Japanese army, had been fighting against the Allied Forces until only a short time before.

But, the founding of the army proceeded without delay along the course set by the US military government authorities, regardless of my mental agony.

So, it was evidently foolish of me to have addressed a written protest to the US military government demanding a change in the way in which the army was being founded. On closer scrutiny, however, isn't it an act devoid of the spirit of independence that I expected the US military government to change its course regarding the founding of the army of our people? When I look back, I feel ashamed about this, too.

### *A Collaborator's Plea*

As I had high hopes and a dream of acting as a commanding officer in the army of my new country and playing the pivotal role in founding the army together with my father-in-law, I was very disappointed and deeply indignant at the army being founded under the command of the US military administration. So it was unthinkable for me to join it. But in early January 1947 I entered the Military Academy as a third-term special student and wore the uniform given by the US military administration, abandoning my status as a Chinese army officer.

How did I, who had cursed the disgraceful way in which the army was founded and refused to join it, come to change my mind

and enter military service?

My father and father-in-law advised me from the first to enter military service and secure a position. As I showed no sign of complying with their wishes, they continued to press me.

I had respected my father from my childhood and my father-in-law since my marriage. It was not merely because they were my family that I respected them, but I respected them from the bottom of my heart for their love of the country to which they had devoted their lives even under the misfortune of national ruin in order to achieve national liberation, and I always used to follow their instructions. It was unthinkable for me to act against their will. This emanated from my own clearly defined code of conduct.

Nevertheless, this time I did not comply with their suggestion meekly. This was because the problem with which I was confronted might have affected the dignity of the nation and so I built up a well-founded argument. They went to great lengths to persuade me to change my stubborn stance. Citing his own bitter experience my father-in-law, chief of the united defence department, said that as the founding of the army being promoted on the initiative of the pro-Japanese elements it was important for as many people with national conscience as possible to join the army. He explained that more people with an anti-Japanese background were needed. Only then, according to him, could the pro-Japanese forces be prevented from holding sway in the military and their arbitrariness and despotism be eliminated.

This was an ardent appeal which reflected the fact that my father-in-law, though chief of the united defence department, had no influence because he had no solid patriotic force behind him.

Having heard him out, I realized that my opinion differed from his on this serious matter.

We stood at a crossroad: we had the choice either of leaving the traitorous pro-Japanese forces to hold the military reins or of strengthening the foothold of the national independence forces by persuading the patriotic forces to join the army and gain some sort of position, however unimportant.

On closer examination I realized I had no alternative. A career soldier, I had no other specialized knowledge for choosing another

profession and to me the soldier's life was familiar. In addition, my father-in-law assured me that I would quickly be commissioned after going through the special class at the military academy for form's sake and then promoted to a higher rank in a short time by "special privilege." I thought this was not so bad.

So, I came to change my mind and stance. The human mind is really cunning. I altered the opinion I had entertained for so long and justified myself with a lot of excuses. In this way I was able to feel less ashamed and more at ease.

Thus, I enrolled in the special course at the military academy as a third-term student and joined the pro-Japanese officers in founding the army. It was early in January 1947.

The military academy of the Korean constabulary was situated in Taenung. There was a special volunteers training centre that had been set up by the Japanese imperialists in order to train our Korean young people prior to committing them in the aggressive war.

The Japanese imperialists had been driven out of this land, yet their spectres still seemed to hover. I do not know who suggested it, but why should, of all things, the former Japanese special volunteers training centre be chosen as the training centre for the officers of our army? It was highly deplorable that such a connection with Japanese imperialism still existed.

Eight of us enrolled in the third-term special class at the military academy. Among them were artilleryman Pak Si Chang, a graduate of the Chinese military staff college, Chae Won Gae, former chief of the general affairs department of the headquarters of the liberation army, and Pak Gi Song, who had served in the general staff of the liberation army. They were men of nationalistic, patriotic conscience who, like me, had enrolled in the army after having for a long time watched how the situation was developing.

Before us Song Ho Song had graduated from the military school as a second term special student.

He had fought in the anti-Japanese war in the Chinese army and had been first appointed commander following liberation before being demoted to a sinecure, blamed by the gang from the Japanese and Manchukuo armies for the failure to suppress the mutiny in

Ryosu and Sunchon; during the Korean war he went over to north Korea.

The company commanders in charge of the trainees during their time at the military academy treated the special students like ordinary young trainees. Contrary to the original commitment, special treatment was afforded us only in name. Far from being treated with distinction, we were maltreated. It was evident that the former Japanese and Manchukuo soldiers who held solid positions without having been through such training showed their displeasure towards those who had fought against Japan in China and in the liberation army.

One of the matters which troubled us veterans was food. It was difficult to digest the boiled whole grains of wheat we were given and, to my disgust, I suffered constantly from diarrhoea.

However, Li Jong Il (who changed his name to Li Song Ga), at that time commander of the first regiment, secretly treated us veterans in the special class to proper meals.

The regimental commander who, like us, had served in the liberation army, must have been prompted by sympathy and comradeship; he made his wife treat us to boiled rice, meat soup and *kimchi*. However, this became known to the American adviser and Li Jong Il was called seriously to account. The former Japanese and Manchukuo soldiers, who had no respect for us, told the adviser. They were really detestable, heartless men. Their ill will manifested itself during military training as well.

We had already been through military training in our youth and had considerable combat experience and we might have been said to be veterans who had gone through hell and high water, as the saying goes. However, they deliberately made us special trainees repeatedly crawl through mud. This was not designed simply to make us suffer physically.

This was a manifestation of mental abuse which was accorded to us simply because we had an anti-Japanese background. This might have been a mental exercise to stifle the sense of guilt they felt and the burden they carried because of their unsavoury record of treason against the nation.

The physical suffering was unbearable, but what was even more

unbearable was the fact that humanity was being trampled underfoot through mental abuse. When I went home on weekend leave after a month, I told my father that I would not return, and would leave the army. He admonished me, telling me that I should return or I would be treated as a deserter and that I should check my petty feelings cherishing high aim. At my further insistence my father talked to my father-in-law over the phone. My father-in-law, the chief of the united defence department, was more taken aback than my father and urged me strongly to return to my unit. I asked Commander Song Ho Song, but did not receive any support from him and was obliged to walk the long distance from my home to Taenung to return to my unit. I trudged the country road in a gloomy mood. It was an unpleasant journey.

Time passed and I graduated after two months, instead of one month as previously arranged. The eight special students from the liberation army graduated together with another eight men who had formerly been noncommissioned officers in the Japanese and Manchukuo armies. They were commissioned in the army with the rank of second lieutenant, according to established etiquette.

Did this mean that the rank of colonel in the Chinese army that fought against Japan was equivalent to the position of a noncommissioned officer in the Japanese army? Did it mean that a background of having fought in the anti-Japanese war was thought so little of that a person with such a background was commissioned as a second lieutenant only after going through Japanese militarist training conducted by ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies, under the control of the US military government? When I came to think of this I became furious.

My clean record of having exiled myself in order to oppose Japanese rule and take part in the anti-Japanese war, was stained in this way. I began a disgraceful life in a place where once the special volunteers training centre had been and where the militarist spectre of the Japanese imperialist aggressors still hovered. Cherishing the dream that the day would come when our nationalists would lead the army, I was obliged to travel a path in company with the unlikable former soldiers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies.

## On the Road to Promotion

*Inspection by Robert, Chief of the Advisory Group, and an Outdoor Lecture*

Commissioned as a second lieutenant after graduating from the military academy, I was assigned to the 6th regiment in Taegu and put in charge of education and operations at the regimental headquarters. Serving as the regimental staff officer, I waited for promotion by special favour, in line with what I had been promised.

As I said before, it was common practice that men from the Japanese and Manchukuo armies were immediately accorded the rank they had held under the Japanese imperialists and were soon advanced two or three ranks at once. I did not want promotion to that extent, but I believed that I ought to be reinstated in my former rank. Being commissioned as a second lieutenant instead of regaining my former rank of colonel made me feel unbearably humiliated in military circles in which rank carried weight. A former captain in the Japanese army was commissioned as a captain and soon became a major and then a colonel. A former captain of the Manchukuo Army became a lieutenant colonel and even a former noncommissioned officer became a second or first lieutenant. Then how could it be that one who had been a colonel and had fought in the anti-Japanese war should be a second lieutenant? These men who had served in the Japanese army were detestable to see and I felt an irresistible resentment at being maltreated by them.

One day a captain, an acquaintance of mine at the headquarters in Seoul, called on me and said, "Sir, congratulations! Apparently you have been promoted to captain by special favour." What! Captain? Only captain? I was furious. But there was no need to make my feelings obvious. I was certain that the personnel documents would be examined by the head of the unified defence department, according to procedures, and that then there would be consultations and things would be put right. It was officially announced afterwards that three of my class, including me, had been promoted to major and the others to company officers. If I was to regain the ranks of colonel, I still had to advance two ranks, but, given the situation, I had to settle for what I had.

At the same time as being promoted to major, I assumed the post

of commander of the 2nd Regiment in Taejon. Because the rank required for a regimental commander was colonel, it was not long before I was promoted to lieutenant colonel.

When I took charge of the regiment, I found that many things had to be settled. Before anything else, the regiment was under strength. It had only two battalions. So I bent my energies to recruiting men in South Chungchong Province. I prevailed on the young men to join the army. In doing so, I took into account that the people of Chungchong Province tended to think that handsome men did not take up arms, this having been the feudal custom of the Li dynasty, when military service was slighted; I explained that if arms were not in the hands of handsome men then they would fall into the hands of bad men, which would eventually cause a public disturbance and national disaster. The results were very good. The recruitment enabled us to make up for the shortage of men in our regiment and to transfer one battalion each to the 13th Regiment in Onyang and the 12th Regiment in Chinju.

I brought my regiment up to strength and tightened discipline. One day Robert, chief of the American advisory group, came in Lieutenant General Hodge's car for an inspection. I was at a loss what to show the chief of the American advisory group as I had not as yet had the chance of doing anything to speak of and had had no proper facilities installed. Then suddenly I remembered how I had trained soldiers at the Burmese front. Hadn't I given the soldiers lectures as part of their training, setting up a blackboard in the shade of a tree in the scorching sun? Recalling this, I decided to show him training conducted in the same manner.

Robert seemed to be very interested in this. Looking at his face I felt confident and suggested that he go closer to see. He said no, and asked me not to bother as it would cause trouble. After observing the scene from a distance, he left for his next destination, as if he had seen enough.

He inspected the 4th Brigade in Chongju, commanded by Chae Byong Dok, and the 13th Regiment in Onyang commanded by Li Jong Il (Li Song Ga).

Several days later Regimental Commander Li Jong Il came to me. As soon as he arrived he said to me, "Brother, did Robert praise you much for what you showed him?" According to him, Robert had



said to the staff officers of his regiment, "If I were a regimental commander, I would visit the 2nd regiment in Taejon to learn, taking my staff officers with me." I found no trace of malice in his remarks and he was genuinely pleased at my being appreciated.

Robert seemed to have spoken in a similar manner elsewhere. Not long afterwards, Chae Byong Dok met me and jeered at me, saying, "I wonder how you've won over the chief adviser... Most impressive! You've been very hospitable to him, I think." I can only say that although he is large in build he is an ill-natured, narrow-minded man.

In connection with this I must say that it was a common practice among the commanding officers of the army to try every way and means of currying favour with their superiors, the American advisers in particular, and to treat them well, even going so far as to offer them bribes of wine and women.

But I had never entertained chief adviser Robert to get into his good books, nor had I ever had a mind to do so. All I had done was to show him my own way of training soldiers. But I cannot say that inwardly I did not want to gain his favour. But I did not give him a banquet or offer him a bribe for the purpose.

I had resisted joining the army because I had found it disgusting to see the ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies lording it over everyone else, but afterwards I had enlisted in it partly of my own accord and partly complying with the views of others, justifying myself by citing the need to prevent these ex-officers from being free to act as they pleased and the importance of strengthening the foothold of the nationalist forces. So I advanced the argument that even one more nationalist ought to enlist in the army and do his best to win promotion. I went further with this argument, but only as far as to believe that one should be on good terms with the American advisers and find favour with them in order to gain a better position and a higher rank.

"A better position and a higher rank!" The high aim nurtured in the beginning was pushed into the background and the means of attaining it were made the aim itself.

But anyway it is a fact that in connection with a bit of a show, the open-air lecture I had arranged, I came to win chief adviser

Robert's favour. As a result, I was promoted from regimental commander to director of the military academy.

The way for me to gain an important position and a higher rank seemed to have been paved. My deepest regret had been that men who had served in the Japanese and Manchukuo armies were being patronized while I who had fought against Japan in Chinese army, was not being duly appreciated; now I was appeased and I was delighted, thinking that I was being given credit for having fought at the Burmese front. Thus, contrary to what I had thought previously, it seemed to me that there was some reason behind what the US army was doing and I felt a sudden urge to get further into the good graces of the US army and the American chief adviser in particular, and become more intimate with them.

### *Cherishing the Ambition of an Educationalist*

It was a surprise to me to be appointed director of the military academy.

At that time the director of the military academy was Kim Baek Il who had served in the Manchukuo army. Having occupied a key post in the military authorities earlier, he was one of those who held the reins in the military authorities and was on intimate terms with Chong Il Gwon and Paek Son Yop and the like. When the headquarters of logistics was set up he, by acting smartly, obtained the post of its commander. So, the post of director of the military academy had fallen vacant.

Several people won public support for filling vacancy, but American chief adviser Robert nominated me for the office, ignoring them, I was told. After accepting the post I invited Robert to deliver a special lecture to the whole cadet body. He jumped at the chance. At the beginning of his lecture he praised me highly as a "good organizer and good educationalist."

I was glad to have won his admiration. In addition, I believed that my assuming the office of director of the military academy was a golden opportunity to realize the ambition I cherished with regard to the army. I estimated that the military academy, training as it did a large number of cadets who would be assigned to units in the different services after graduation, provided a fine opportunity to

implant the national spirit in them so that later the patriotic forces might get the better of the pro-Japanese forces in the army. I decided to become involved in training the cadets, taking pride in being an educationalist.

When I first went to the academy after my appointment, I felt unhappy on realizing that the place had been the special volunteers training centre for the Japanese imperialists to take our young people and send them into the jaws of death, even though I had recently been trained there. That the cadre training centre for our national army should be sited in such a place! I decided that this was the first matter I should tackle.

So I came to think about a suitable site for the academy.

At that time there was an intelligence officer called Li Gon Guk at the academy. He was a young man who had deserted from Japanese army after being conscripted as a student soldier and had returned home as a soldier in the liberation army. The post of intelligence officer was a sinecure at the academy. The observation of the movements of the cadets was done by the higher intelligence agency and the G-2's function of collecting and analysing information concerning the enemy's movements was unnecessary there. So I sent him away to find a suitable place, explaining that the present academy buildings and their surroundings had a bad mental effect on the education of the cadets and that the terrain was unfavourable.

A few days later he reported the results of his survey. He recommended the site of the present "Walker Hill." On examination I found it suitable. It overlooked the Han River to the south and a high mountain range stretched behind it. It commanded a fine view of the fortress on Namhan far off to the south, with an open field in the foreground. It seemed that the land around it could easily be obtained as it belonged to King Li's family and the area was sparsely populated. So it was suitable in every respect.

A construction plan and an estimate was drawn up in haste and submitted for approval. But matters did not go as I wished and were deferred. When Li Bom Sok took office as defence minister after the establishment of the "Republic of Korea" I called on him. There were many visitors to his house throughout the day. I had to wait for a long time to be admitted. Finally my turn came and I met him.

I reported to him about the situation at the academy and submitted the construction plan of the new academy to him. He paid little heed to my explanation of the plan and showed no interest in the matter.

I waited for his reply, but none was forthcoming.

There were a lot of strange things about Li Bom Sok. Earlier, he had taken part in the anti-Japanese war on the Chinese mainland and, when in command of the second detachment of the liberation army, he had once asked me to join him as its second-in-command. But after returning to the motherland I found it impossible to meet him. He did not confide in me. But, as he liked Chae Byong Dok, an ex-officer of the Japanese army, who called on him and entreated him on his knees, he made him chief of the general staff of the defence ministry when he was prime minister and concurrently minister of national defence. At a conference of commanding officers he once said that as far as the composition of the south Korean army was concerned, the numbers of men from the Japanese-Manchukuo armies and the Chinese-liberation armies were balanced. But, in fact, men from the Japanese and Manchukuo armies formed the overwhelming majority and its backbone. He went so far as to rename the military disciplinary corps, which had existed since the days of the united defence department, the military police as it had been known in the days of Japanese imperialist rule. I could not help having doubts about such conducts, considering it unworthy of an anti-Japanese fighter.

At any rate, due to the non-cooperative attitude of the minister of national defence, the plan for building a new military academy went round in circles and got nowhere; anyway I had to resign my post, so my ambition was thwarted.

By the way, let me relate the sequel to this story, With the start of the June 25 war, the military academy automatically ceased to exist. Later a military academy was set up and run temporarily in Chinhae, according to a plan drawn up by Van Fleet.

After An Chun Saeng, the nephew of martyr An Jung Gun, who had been my fellow student during my 10th term at the Chinese military academy, was appointed director of the military academy in Chinhae, I sent my construction plan to him. But he, too, was unable to have the new building constructed.

Kim Jong O, who succeeded him to the post, arranged that the new building be erected on the same site in Taenung. No one objected. To Van Fleet, it was good enough to make a good impression with a small outlay of money, because a new site would have entailed a heavy cost. Thus, the training of cadets continued on the site of the former special volunteers training centre of the Japanese imperialists. The ghost of Japanese militarism remained and did not want to leave this land.

While holding the office of director of the academy I busied myself in vain to carry out my plan, not knowing that the matter of erecting a new academy building would be settled in this way.

The “Republic of Korea” was established during my time as director of the academy. Thus I became the last director of the military academy of the Korean constabulary and the first one of the military academy of the “Republic of Korea.” I turned out graduates for 7th term as well as a number of men who had completed a special course, but I resigned around the time that the students had finished about half of their 8th term.

As director I controlled the whole course of training and, making use of the time allotted for political education, made a speech in which I stressed mainly the need to get rid of the Japanese influence in the soldier’s life and prevent corruption in the army.

The graduation ceremony for the 7th term special course was attended by President Syngman Rhee, the minister of defence, the chief of staff of the army and others. This was the first time I met Syngman Rhee.

The 8th term graduates played the leading role in the May 16 coup d’état. Some of those who graduated from the military academy when I was its director still serve in the army and some are active in political and financial circles, having become important members of society.

But when I consider whether they have all lived with a clear national conscience and patriotism, I am discouraged in many cases.

Viewed in this light, the fact that I held the office of director of the military academy and nurtured a great ambition to strengthen the foothold of nationalism does not seem to be worthy of pride.

In fact I am keenly aware that the ability of an individual is

negligible and limited as long as he cannot be a giant in a great mechanism. Later Walker Hill, the so-called best pleasure ground in south Korea, was laid out on the site I had intended for the military academy. How absurd!

### *In the Swamp of Anti-Communism*

The founding of the army, which before my enlistment, had started under the guidance of the US military administration with the ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies as the backbone, proceeded in earnest with the passage of time and the army rapidly increased in strength. The united defence department was set up in accordance with the decree of the US military government on November 23, 1945 and the army rapidly improved its organization and increased in strength during the three years of the military administration. It increased from one regiment at the beginning of 1946 to 15 regiments with a combined strength of 20,000 in 1948 and a plan to increase it to 50,000 was being pursued by the US military administration. With the establishment of the south Korean government in 1948, the united defence department was reformed into the national defence department, 500 strong US military advisory group under temporary chief Brigadier General Robert was set up and a plan to increase the strength of the army to 200,000 was implemented. At the same time, the military service law was issued and conscription introduced. According to this a headquarters for military affairs was set up in each province to accelerate the expansion of the armed forces. As a result, the strength of the army increased rapidly to eight divisions (22 regiments) by June 1949.

The expansion of the army paved the way for my promotion.

I had won the favour of the chief of the US military advisory group, Robert, and the post of the director of the military academy before being promoted to commander of the 3rd Brigade, yielding the post of director of the military academy to Kim Hong Il who had belatedly returned home from China. With the expansion of the army's organization I was promoted to commander of the 3rd Division and regained my former rank of colonel. However, I was not yet satisfied because ex-officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo

armies still held sway in the army, while those who had taken the course of nationalism carried no weight.

In such conditions my desires could not be met. Whenever I saw former captains and first lieutenants in the Japanese and Manchukuo armies swaggering about, promoted faster than me and given high positions, to say nothing of former colonels and majors in the Japanese army, my pride was greatly hurt. Moreover, seeing these traitors who had betrayed the nation promoted and throwing their weight about, I seriously doubted whether such an army could discharge its duty as an army with national spirit. It seemed to me that the expansion of the army with these pro-Japanese elements and traitors as the backbone was not a matter for rejoicing, however great its strength was.

By the way I could not overlook the fact that the process of this expansion of the army was accompanied by a whirlwind of a bloody purge of disloyal elements from the army. This exerted no little influence on my state of mind.

The situation in Korea following August 15 liberation was very complicated and strained. The pros and cons of trusteeship, the Right-Left confrontation and conflict, the fruitless sessions of the US-Soviet joint committee and its dissolutions, the enforcement of the policy for a separate government and the ensuing political crisis—all these were a cause for concern.

With this rapidly-changing situation as the background, the military pursued the one-sided policy of expanding the army in an atmosphere where only confrontation with north Korea was stressed. Leftists could not openly exist in the army. The only matter of concern was the reckless pursuance of a military buildup of the south in preparation for a northward expedition.

However, when “separate elections” and the “establishment of a separate government” became issues, the latent Right-Left confrontation in the military came to the fore at last and led to a bloody conflict.

The fact that the US military administration assisted in the formation of the separate south Korean government after the dissolution of the US-Soviet joint committee which had achieved nothing, meant a perpetuation of national division, and this the

nationalists could not ignore. Fortunately the leftist force, too, strongly opposed the establishment of a separate south Korean government. The leftist force, which had been driven underground, rose in revolt and many soldiers joined it.

It was while I was director of the military academy that the May 10 separate election and the establishment of the south Korean government took place, and this evoked mixed feelings in me. I could not wholeheartedly support the separate election and the establishment of separate government in south Korea in view of the fact that it meant consolidating national division but, on the other hand, I was not in a position to oppose the great America. So I could do nothing other than ostensibly support the birth of the south Korean government, though I did not welcome it.

However, the leftist force opposed the establishment of a separate government. To cope with this the US military administration resorted to all-out suppression, calling out the police and the military for the purpose. Revolt and suppression were followed by a terrible purge.

Initially the purge was said to be designed to detect and remove from the army members of the South Korean Workers' Party. I regarded it as inevitable that extremists be exposed and removed because I believed that the communists were acting on the directives of the Comintern.

But the purge went to extremes and men who opposed the separate government were all made its targets, being branded as communists, and this astonished me. The soldiers of the 14th Regiment, which was called out to suppress the Cheju Island popular uprising against the separate election, mutinied on October 19, 1948 in Ryosu and Suncheon. The mutiny was bloodily suppressed and a wide-scale purge followed.

Is it true that all the opponents of the separate election are communists? Can so many people all be communists? I writhed, unable to resolve the doubts which arose in my mind one after another.

Meanwhile, following the mutiny of the 6th Regiment in Taegu the battalions of the 8th Regiment of the 6th Division commanded by Major Kang and Major Pyo, as well as the ship JI from the First



Squadron of the Navy, defected to north Korea. I could not understand what was happening.

I was unable to distinguish between right and wrong. What attitude should a nationalist adopt in this situation? I was thrown into agony. I believed that the formation of the separate government went against the interests of the nation, but I was indisposed to join the communists who were supposedly acting on the directives of the Comintern. I was not inclined to welcome or boycott the establishment of the south Korean government, so I watched the whirlwind of the purge with anxiety and concern.

Many officers were purged and many troops lost their lives in the punitive operations.

A merciless massacre and a bloody purge were carried out. There was little hope for revival for people, irrespective of whether they were extremists or not, once they had fallen under suspicion. Supposedly alien or unreliable elements and those who had connections with north Korea, to say nothing of those who had been involved in the Leftist movement under Japanese imperialist rule and those who had been imprisoned, were all dismissed from military service. The nationalists, who had been involved in the anti-Japanese movement, were ostensibly left alone, but they were looked upon with suspicion.

It is a fact that in several cases the purge was affected by personal feelings.

The fact that 80 per cent of the third-term graduates of the military academy were identified as targets of the purge shows how vast it was in scale. Even commander Song Ho Song was accused of being a communist. There were many victims of the purge and over 8,000 officers and men were dismissed from military service. For those who could not be branded communists such a crafty method as gradually depriving them of their rank and position was adopted.

The US army CIC participated directly in the purge on the orders of US military adviser Lieutenant Colonel Grasso and it was commanded by chief of the intelligence department Major Paek Son Yong. A second lieutenant named Kim Chang Ryong, who was in charge of intelligence in the 1st Regiment was the head of the action corps.

Kim Chang Ryong arrested, put to torture and punished many officers at random, wielding the sword of the purge. He came from Yonghung, South Hamgyong Province. He had enlisted in the Japanese army and served as a secret agent for the Kwantung Army under Japanese imperialist rule. He had returned home following August 15 liberation, but when his service record came to light he had fled to south Korea and entered the military academy. After graduation from it as a third term graduate he was appointed in succession chief of intelligence in the 1st Regiment and commander of the counterintelligence corps and of the secret service corps; he acted with a high hand for ten years under Syngman Rhee's patronage until he was killed on January 30, 1956. Among those who died at his hands were not only men involved in the communist party but also no small number of innocent people and people with nationalist views.

The sweeping purge considerably disheartened the nationalists in the army. The military turned into a sort of great swamp of anti-communism. I was in no position to keep myself in this swamp of anti-communism indefinitely.

I, who had taken the path of advancement under the patronage of the chief of the US advisory group Robert, hesitated to pursue my promising career. I had nothing to fear because I had nothing to do with the communist party, but I did not feel at ease, not knowing what trick might be played on me.

The atmosphere during the army purge was so grim that those who were not against communism were frowned upon as pro-communist, so the undecided, middle-of-the-road attitude was an uncomfortable one. That was why anti-communism came to be taken not as an idea but as a sort of badge for personal safety.

So I had to wear this badge, which when I think about it, was a cowardly act. When I recall any state of mind at that time I am reminded of the ironical remark of Lord Bertrand Russell, which goes, "Ideology is taken up by one's self interest and not because of its truth." In fact I accepted anti-communism not as an idea but as a means of self-preservation.

But, did I use anti-communism as a mere badge? Anti-communism, which I adhered to initially for the sake of self-preservation, came to serve as a means for my further advancement.

I was sinking in the swamp of anti-communism before I knew it.

## Realistic Thinking

### *Troubled by Bewilderment*

With August 15 liberation producing such great emotional excitement, the subsequent development in the homeland brought all the more embarrassment and disillusionment.

Who on earth fixed the 38th parallel as the line of division and why should our territory and nation have been divided into north and south? If the intention was to disarm the Japanese army, why did the military occupation continue and why was the military administration enforced even though the country had not been defeated and despite the fact that the Japanese army had surrendered and had been disarmed? Why was the “provisional government,” which had wholeheartedly adhered to the principle of national independence from Japan for tens of years in a foreign land, ignored and any independent activity by our nation suppressed? Why was the country divided into north and south and why were separate governments established in north and south? When would the 38th parallel be cleared away and how would complete national independence be achieved? All this was in doubt.

All these questions troubled me continually and I was in agony, unable to find satisfactory answers to them.

This was inevitable because in those days my political insight was not at such a level as to enable me to properly analyse and judge the implications of the complicated situation. My political vision at that time was, so to speak, nearsighted, colour blind and astigmatic.

The interpretation, understanding and judgement of any problem differ according to the position and view from which it is seen. Although I professed to be a nationalist, I had no well-defined, steadfast idea concerning nationalism. My concept of nationalism was very vague and was not beyond the stage of susceptibility. So it did not have force of faith. Such being the case, I lacked any ability to understand the course of the development of our national

history.

So, in the complicated situation prevailing in those days, I did not know what to do and had no steadfast spirit of independence with which to help our nation carve out its own destiny by using its own will and strength.

Consequently, I attributed the historic fact of getting rid of the Japanese imperialist yoke on August 15 to the defeat of Japan by the Allies, and I was inclined to admit that it was inevitable that the United States should enforce its military administration for a certain period and exercise an influence over our nation-building and founding of the army. My view was that historical realities could not be ignored and that this was a realistic standpoint with which to ride or yield to the tide of history. This amounted to an attitude by which one accepted that the history of our nation was moulded not by the autonomous agency of our nation but under the influence of outside forces.

Hence, my basic stand and attitude towards the founding of the state and army being supported by the US army was uncertain and I believed that this state of affairs was an unavoidable, temporary phenomenon.

If at that time I had had any steadfast idea about national independence, I could have made a correct analysis and judgement of Lieutenant General Hodge's comment, "in due course," which was carried in the Cairo Declaration and concerned the date of the independence of Korea, as well as the conclusion which was arrived at in the top secret document drawn up under the title "Minutes of the Conference of Secretaries of State, Army and Navy" by Secretary of State Burns, Secretary of the Army Peterson and Undersecretary of the Navy Sillyburn in May 1946. The conclusion was that the stalemate in south Korea was attributable to the south Korean people being unable to handle the situation and being politically backward.

But at that time I failed to display the spirit of national independence in order to inquire into the political remarks made by the United States concerning south Korea and to see the true intention of the United States' policy toward Korea. So, although everything displeased me I regarded it as an inevitable, transitory phenomenon and adopted a passive attitude towards it. I simply

writhed in agony, deploring the ill fortune of the nation that was faced with such difficult problems.

### *I Went to the United States to Study*

In the early summer of 1949 I resigned as commander of the Third Division and went to the United States to study. Studying abroad may be viewed as a happy opportunity, but in effect it was not so for me.

Several circumstances induced me to go to the United States to study.

First, I was uneasy about the sweeping purge.

The 3rd Division under my command originally had its headquarters in Pusan. The 5th Regiment, under the command of Regimental Commander Chang Do Yong, was stationed in Musan, the 6th Regiment commanded by O Dok Jun in Taegu and Pak Si Chang's 16th Regiment in Masan. With the revolt in Taegu, grenades were thrown in broad daylight and the situation grew worse. At that time the governor of North Kyongsang Province, Chong Hyon Mo, and chief of the police bureau, Cho Jae Chon, persistently appealed to the authorities to move the headquarters of the 3rd Brigade (later raised to the status of a division) in Pusan to Taegu; finally they succeeded. So the headquarters of the 3rd Brigade was moved to Taegu.

Operations of suppression were launched. Following the mutiny in Ryosu and Sunchon an operation was launched to suppress it and the insurgent troops took shelter deep on Mt. Chiri. Around this time a company of the 6th Regiment in Taegu which had been sent to the Pohang area mutinied and attempted to join the troops on Mt. Chiri. To check this a battalion of the 5th Regiment in Pusan was called out to the Ulsan-Pohang line only to suffer severe casualties in a truck accident on its way and to fail in its mission.

This accident was a serious blow to me. Commander Song Ho Song was forced to retire from the post of commander, being held to blame for the mutiny in Ryosu and Sunchon. Considering this, there was no guarantee that I would be able to carry on without any trouble. With an uneasy mind, I should not like to hold the post of divisional commander for an indefinite period. It was a severe

strain for me to wait until someone would find fault with me and bring me to account for the accident. This was the first reason why I went to the United States to study.

Next, I was disillusioned with the strange political situation revealed by the assassination of Kim Gu, and I wanted to escape from such an atmosphere, even for a short time.

The assassination of Kim Gu was a great sadness to me. He had suffered a great deal of hardship in a foreign land, obeying his national conscience and principles. To hear that he had been assassinated in the liberated homeland! How deplorable it was that, to make matters worse, the assassin was an officer on the active list of the south Korean army!

The assassination of Kim Gu came as a great shock to me and I felt very gloomy and wanted to escape from the tense political atmosphere even for a short while, so I seized the opportunity to study in the United States when it was offered.

The third reason why I decided to go to the United States to study might not be considered so honourable. Commander Song Ho Song's retirement and Chae Byong Dok's appointment as chief of staff by Minister of Defence Li Bom Sok promoted those from the Japanese and Manchukuo armies, but displeased me all the more. Li Bom Sok, whom I considered to be my senior, and with whom I was well acquainted since being in China seemed somehow to want to steer well clear of those who knew about his past.

In the army some of those who had fought against Japan became the target of the purge and the remainder had no power worth mentioning. Those from the Japanese and Manchukuo armies, and especially the officers who had served in the Manchukuo army were on their high horse, extending their influence by forming intimate relationships between themselves. I was keenly aware of my pride being trampled underfoot, but I was unable to vent my surging anger.

Around this time the opportunity to study in the United States was offered. While I am there, I can study the military science of the United States and improve my ability and enhance my authority. Then I will find a solution. In addition, I can see the sights of the United States. So, it will not be a bad idea. It is a fact

that I inwardly consulted my own interests in this way.

In short, I must confess that my going to the United States to study was motivated by my intention to adapt myself to the situation, without regard for the fate of the nation.

Finally I left to study abroad.

Still vivid in my mind's eye is the scene of my parting from my father at the airport. This was the last I saw and heard of him.

Upon my arrival in the United States, having gone via Japan I, together with Colonel Choe Hong Hui, enrolled in Army General School at Port Riley.

The school was the lowest officer training centre for commissioned second lieutenants in the US army. At the school, I was ashamed of my colonel's badge and, together with Colonel Choe Hong Hui, decided to wear the badge of major.

Colonel Choe had been arrested by the Japanese government authorities, accused of being the prime mover behind the student-soldiers incident in Pyongyang and had experienced all kinds of bitter insult before being saved, greeting August 15 liberation a few days before his planned execution.

Once a contest of strength was held at the school. When small Colonel Choe appeared before a tall, sturdy American youth, both his adversary and the spectators burst out laughing, thinking it a mismatch. The American youth rushed at Choe with a shout, but somehow his large body was floored, while Colonel Choe remained standing as he was. The term "Taekwon-Do" was still unknown, so the crowd cheered him, shouting "karate, karate!"

I was leading a happy campus life until I went through an examination in the drill called military stakes. It included physical training, shooting, an assault course and other disciplines at 36 posts and was marked out of 1,000 points.

I did not take a part in the drill and only made observations at each post with a view to referring to them when training junior officers in the future.

This fact was reported and I was given zero marks and told to leave the school. I asked to be allowed to remain at the school as an observer, because I could not return home with only half the course

completed as I was studying at the public expense of south Korea, and not under the US military administration.

I was permitted to remain at the school as an observer and finished the whole course as an observer.

After graduating from the army general school we went to an infantry school. We were to enlist in the junior class. At Christmas we visited the home of an American youth, an intimate classmate of Colonel Choe Hong Hui, at his invitation and became acquainted with his father. His father was Major General Bolt, chief of the operations bureau of the army headquarters.

We told him frankly that we were ashamed to enlist in the junior class, and we were enlisted in the senior class through his good offices.

So we completed the higher military course on July 23, 1950, a course which had begun on January 5. Because my language was too weak for me to understand the lectures, I did the best I could by using a dictionary to prepare for and revise lessons. Before graduation I submitted a treatise on my battle and operations experience. It was not obligatory for foreign students to deliver a treatise but I spoke about my experience in the operations in Burma for about 25 minutes.

I graduated from the school, having managed to go through the whole course. I believed myself to be a soldier who would not suffer by comparison as I had studied military science in the United States, where it was known to be the best in the world.

My heart was filled with a vague hope and I felt an urge to do something again. I attended the graduation ceremony in a restless mood, unbecoming to my age. Luckily, Major General Bolt came and delivered a congratulatory address.

I barely caught the words "Korea" and "tense situation" in his address, but I could not understand his address clearly because he spoke quickly and I was weak at understanding English. I studied the faces of the American officers but I could not form any judgement. It turned out later that already at that time the tense situation at the Korean front was the common knowledge of the US military.

With the graduation ceremony my period of study abroad was at



an end. Now I was to return home.

On June 24 we set out on our return journey. Learning during the journey that war had broken out in the homeland we negotiated with the US Defence Department concerning our need to return home quickly by plane as war had broken out in Korea. As a result, we boarded a military plane in San Francisco on July 12 and reached home via Japan on July 14.



# The June 25 War and I OBJ



*Choe Dok Sin as an army corps commander*

Excepting us, all those who were aboard the plane were American officers. I had known from their talks that as soon as the June 25 war broke out, the US forces secured the command of the air and sea on the Korean front and rushed headlong into the war. Already the Smith troops were airlifted from Kyushu, Japan, and committed to battle as an advance contingent to check the north Korean army's southward advance. Then the US 24th Division disembarked. US ground forces in Japan were continuously dispatched to the Korean front, so the war situation would be reversed soon.

The American officers were in tune; they seemed as if going to hunting, not to the battlefields to make a showdown. They made light of north Korea's military strength, regarding it as below the third-or fourth-class and looked on the north Korean army as a negligible army which would be smashed up by the US armed forces.

They had a good laugh, saying that in the evening of the Sunday when the June 25 war broke out Marshal MacArthur, Commander of the US Armed Forces in the Far East in Tokyo bragged, "I can give north Koreans a raw deal with one of my hands put behind my back."

Their talks made me think that the war would not last long. Then, how should the future of our nation be shaped?

I thought that because the confrontation between the north and the south was an ideological one, they could not be united by means of negotiations and after all there was no other way but to merge them through confrontation of strength—one side's subjugation of the other side. So, I said willy-nilly that I wanted to get off at Taejon, the northernmost of US-backed south Korea.

I deplaned at Taejon, but our troops were not seen around. An American lieutenant colonel drove up to me on a jeep and asked me why I had got off there. I told him that I was looking for the Army Headquarters. At this he said that it had moved to Taegu the previous day and that they were going to throw up this airbase soon and withdraw.

We hurriedly gave a signal to the plane which started the engine to take the air after landing us and got on it. We arrived in Taegu in

the afternoon. We were warmly welcomed by Kim Sin, the son of Kim Gu, who was then the commander of the Taegu airbase. I went to the Army Headquarters by his car. I reported about my return home and requested my being dispatched to the front line. At the Army Headquarters I met an American adviser with whom I had an acquaintance from the days of my service in the constabulary. He tipped me off, "You will be placed as a special adviser to Commander Walker." On the 16th, however, Chong Il Gwon summoned me and said, "Kim Jong Won, commander of the 26th Regiment of the 3rd Division is on bad terms with the American adviser, so I want you, Mr. Choe, to take the trouble to give a lead to the regimental commander." The 26th Regiment was under the direct orders of divisional commander Li Jun Sik, so it was strange to me that he entrusted me in disregard of him. However it was an order so I could not help it.

At the time Kim Jong Won's regiment lost the hill north of Yongdok and fought desperately, taking up a position around a village and primary school in the plain.

At last I plunged into the whirlpool of the war. In this way I came to go through the burned-down streets and villages across the three thousand-ri land covered with dead bodies and drenched in blood.

The war caused a big change in the look of the country as well as in the people's customs and manners. A lot of change took place also around me and in the life of my family. In course of time I, too, rose in rank and once I was in the spotlight of the public with my presence in the truce talks at Panmunjom. However, I could not be light-hearted.

The war which lasted three years and one month and two days had left an irremediable scar in the life of our nation.

I look back on the bygone days viewing in the new light the matters which I had failed to think of while rushing east and west during the war.

## In the Whirlpool of the War

*I Plunged into the Battlefield*

I arrived at Yongdok which was in the heat of action. I met Regimental Commander Kim Jong Won and heard of the progress of battle. The situation was unfavourable to us and it was taking a critical turn.

Without delay I got a battalion to build the defensive position on the right ridge and another one on the left ridge and kept the remaining one as a reserve. Taking the regimental commander with me I went to the defensive position of the right-flanking battalion and gave operational instructions, and then was heading for the left-flank across the open land, when the north Korean army which occupied the hill north of Yongdok fired direct-firing guns. I faced down and ran and again prostrated, advanced on all fours to cover the distance, and darted. Regimental Commander Kim Jong Won who ran after me collapsed and lost his senses when he reached the well side. This is because, as I learned later, he who was a chronic diabetic and used to command driving the car was obliged to run after me, his superior. I sprinkled cold water over him and massaged him. Then he narrowly recovered his senses.

Meanwhile things turned hopeless and the regimental force retreated unable to resist the pressure of the north Korean army. I was obliged to regroup the unit and retreated to Kanggu. There we gained a breathing space and built the defence positions.

In this way I had to take to flight as soon as I plunged into the battlefield.

It was a sorry plight. I could not understand how come it that we had been beaten off from the 38th parallel to the 37th, and then halfway to the 36th parallel.

In 1949 when I left for the study in the United States before the war, south Korea far surpassed north Korea in military potential. The former's armed force totalled far more than 150,000, if the 50,000-strong police was put together. This huge military force had been organized, trained and equipped by the US military government after August 15 liberation and following the founding of the "ROK" it was trained to build up its war potential to provide against emergencies under the command and control of 500 American military advisors led by Brigadier General Robert.

On the other hand, forty per cent of south Korea's total budget

was allocated to the expenditure of national defence in 1949, and officers were sent in a planned way to study in the United States or receive training at US army units stationed in Japan. It was not without reason that Robert, the head of advisory group, called the south Korean army an “invincible army.” The US army authorities had directed great attention to building up war potential of the south Korean army before anything else.

When I recalled that on May 9, 1950 Johanson, Chief of the south Korean Section of the US Economic Cooperation Administration, bragged in his testimony to the House Appropriation Subcommittee, that the south Korean army armed with US equipment and trained by US military advisory group was ready to start a war any time and Marshal MacArthur extolled the south Korean army as the “best army in Asia,” north Korea’s advance to the south was beyond my imagination.

In those days north Korea’s southward advance was hardly possible in all respects. Viewed in the light of the history of their founding, south Korean army was more than four years old while the north Korean army was only over two. The former involved as its nuclei officers from Japanese and Manchukuo armies who had rich combat experience and received regular training of the Japanese army which fought the Pacific War against the allied armed forces, while the latter had but a few commanding officers who had at most the experience of guerrilla warfare and as a regular army it was yet quite green to modern warfare.

Conditions were the same when comparing the forces behind them. The US army that was behind the south Korean army was known as the armed force strongest in the world which was armed with highly efficient up-to-date weapons including atomic bombs on solid financial foundations, had a long history in which it fought countless number of big and small wars and won the World War II without suffering damages in its mainland. On the contrary the Soviet Union and communist China that were behind north Korea, were not in a position to welcome the outbreak of war on the Korean peninsula. Under the circumstances where north Korea was hard to expect positive support either from the Soviet Union which had made the greatest sacrifices in the Second World War and was thirsty for peace or from communist China which was short of one

year after its national foundation following the long-drawn Sino-Japanese War and the civil war, it was hard to imagine that north Korea would unleash the war.

My such opinion totally agreed with what Brigadier General Robert who headed the US military advisory group in south Korea until just before June 25 said at a press interview in San Francisco when he was transferred to the United States. He remarked: “A rumour about the north’s preparation for war was utterly groundless. The US military advisory group did not keenly feel the need to give aid to the south Korean army and so it used only about 17 per cent of its appropriations.”

For all my examination I could not find the possibility of north Korea’s southward advance. But on the third day after the start of the June 25 war Seoul was surrendered and the front kept moving south. I was only astonished at this stark fact.

In June 1949, before I went to the United States, to enumerate from the west of the first line, the 17th Regiment was taking up positions on the Ongjin peninsula, the 1st Division in Kaesong, the 7th Division in Tongduchon and the 8th Division in Chumunjin, and the Metropolitan Division in Seoul and the 6th Division in Wonju. And in the rear the 2nd Division was stationing at Taejon, the 3rd Division at Taegu and the 5th Division at Kwangju. But how all these strongholds were collapsed was a riddle to me.

So far they had a view that should a war break out on the Korean peninsula, it would end in the conquest of north Korea by the northward expedition of US-backed south Korea. To this end, thoroughgoing preparations were made and big and small clashes of arms were caused incessantly along the 38th parallel. This scheme was an invariable policy from the days of US military government and was a matter of common sense of military circles.

After setting up a separate government in south Korea in 1948, President Syngman Rhee clamoured for the “unification through northward expedition” and “recovery of the lost land” and Li Bom Sok, Prime Minister and concurrently Defence Minister, encouraged men and officers by appealing them to advance on the north in full force and rest, flying the south Korean flag on Mt. Paekdu and with their rifles and swords put on the shore of the Tuman River. Sin Song Mo who became defence minister next to Li Bom Sok boasted,



“The armaments of the National Army are so much dependable that it can conquer the whole of north Korea within three days.” As is widely known, Kim Sok Won, Commander of the 1st division, said before the officers and men of his division on May 4, 1949, “Should the north expedition start, we will take breakfast in Haeju, lunch in Pyongyang and supper in Sinuiju...” Chae Byong Dok, Chief of General Staff, publicly declared in his New Year’s address of 1950, “North Korea’s armed forces are no more than 80,000 and their weapons are outmoded, so there is nothing to worry about. The National Army’s future task is to take back the lost territory by practical action.” This implied that their lust for northward expedition reached the climax.

The northward expedition was not a propaganda made in word but the objective of practical action. The eloquent proof of this was that on February 15, 1949 the “governments of five provinces in the north” were formed and their governors were appointed.

But the objective of northward expedition that had been noisily advertised and the sky-high spirits for conquering north Korea vanished like a bubble; the President and the government took to flight and the army, too, were fleeing. What a deplorable thing!

When the 26th regiment was regrouped in Kanggu and the battle came to a lull I was appointed chief of staff of the 1st Army Corps commanded by Kim Hong Il. In this way the assumption of my being a special adviser to 8th Army Commander Walker was not brought into reality. Those hailing from the Manchukuo army could not feel easy if they placed in such a position me who had come from the Chinese army, and ever fought against Japan.

How came it that Chong Il Gwon, who had been a captain of the Manchukuo army before August 15, 1945 could be the chief of general staff?

On June 29, a few days after the start of the war, Marshal MacArthur flew to Suwon from Japan. Giving a briefing to Marshal MacArthur Brigadier General Church who, seeing the remnants of the south Korean army which was crushed the instant it went into action along the 38th parallel and fled to the south of the Han River, did not hesitate to say that “It would be better to go to war with one hundred New York policemen than with the whole of the south Korean army” pointed to the fact that beaten out by the north

Korean army the south Korean ground forces were dwindled to 25,000 or one fourth of the total in a few days. Marshal MacArthur inquired of Chief of General Staff Chae Byong Dok about what countermeasure he had worked out. The latter failed to give a satisfactory answer. Marshal MacArthur said to Dr. Syngman Rhee that "South Korea needs a new Chief of General Staff." Within less than 48 hours Chong Il Gwon was put, in place of Chae Byong Dok, to the post of commander-in-chief of the three services and chief of the general staff of the army which was not on the official list at the time. As a result, the balance of power between factions in the military came to turn for those coming from the Manchukuo army, not for those from the Japanese army.

Assigned as chief of staff of the 1st army corps, instead of special adviser to Commander Walker, by Chong Il Gwon, I assumed my new post at the headquarters of the corps in Andong. The 1st Army Corps commanded by Kim Hong Il involved the Metropolitan Division (under the command of Kim Sok Won) and the 8th Division (under the command of Li Song Ga). Major General Kim Hong Il formed the 1st Army Corps with the remnants of the 1st and 7th and Metropolitan Divisions fleeing from the areas along the 38th parallel. At that time the corps had under its command the Metropolitan Division and the 8th Division which withdrew from Kangnung.

Thus I came to take an active part in the June 25 war as chief of staff of such corps. I started to attend to my duties with an ambition to distinguish myself in war.

### *I Was Driven Away to Pusan*

I remember that while I was in the post of chief of staff of the 1st Army Corps, I was on good terms and congenial with Commander Kim Hong Il. From the corps commander and staff officers I could learn how the war progressed since its outbreak.

Narratives of personal experiences of many soldiers showed that no wonder the south Korean army was crushed and put to rout. North Korean army's fighting strength was stronger than what was imagined, while ours was too weak and vulnerable. The ability of commanding officers, too, presented a problem and the fighting

spirit of the rank and file was deplorable. They had no definite aim with which to take part in the war at the cost of their lives and so superiors and subordinates were not united. This was also ascribable to the fact that majority of the commanding officers were formerly junior officers of the Japanese and Manchukuo armies. Soldiers were hardly obedient to these pro-Japanese elements. This is why they fell to pieces unable to counter the north Korean army's strong attack. Moreover, there were no small number of the cases in which they shot junior officers like platoon and company commanders from behind and fled severally. It was not strange that the troops of this kind took to flight, beaten out by the north Korean army which advanced with irresistible force. In evaluating the combat strength of the army, taking into account the material factor is, of course, important, but most essential is the spiritual factor.

Now we could not but look forward to massive commitment of the US army. The military authorities firmly believed that the US army would retaliate. However, the development of the situation showed that the circumstances of the US troops were almost the same with those of the south Korean army.

The entry of the US armed forces into the war which began with the dispatch of the American naval and air forces concurrently with the outbreak of June 25 war got into stride by the dispatch of the US ground forces stationing in Japan. Marshal MacArthur threw the US 24th, 25th and 1st Cavalry Divisions into the Korean front in succession. These composed the US 8th Army in south Korea which was under the command of Lieutenant General Walker.

The first contingent was the Task Force Smith. Lieutenant Colonel Smith, Commander of the 1st Battalion, 21st Regiment, US 24th Division which was quartered in the Campwood, Kyushu, Japan, arrived in Taejon through Pusan leading 440-strong task force. Its task was to check or retard to the utmost the north Korean army's southward advance until the 24th Division led by Major General Dean arrived.

Lieutenant Colonel Smith worked out an operation plan to intercept the north Korean troops and check their advance in the area which lies to the south of the Suwon airbase 80 kilometres away from Taejon to the north and is five kilometres north of Osan.

The Task Force Smith had no sooner gone into battle than it was disintegrated. Of 440 only 80 or more remnants could reach the 34th Regiment deployed in Pyongtaek. However, Pyongtaek, too, was untenable. The road from Pyongtaek to Chonan was littered with the outfits thrown away by the fleeing American soldiers.

Divisional commander Dean replaced the commander of the 34th regiment who fled as far as 20 kilometres south of Chonan before having a fight to speak of, but this could not improve the situation. He must have least imagined at the time that a few days later he himself would be taken prisoner.

In the Taejon battle Major General Dean could not find even the way to discharge his part as divisional commander. The whole division became like “a rat in the jar” and was annihilated in utter confusion and disorder. The battle resulted in a miserable tragedy. Major General Dean who was scared out of his wits at the great power of the north Korean army which was displayed all over the front line was taken prisoner while fleeing in private’s clothes. It was July 25, ten days after my taking part in the Korean war.

The American troops which boasted of being the strongest in the world failed to arrest the southward advance of the north Korean army.

It was obvious that the north Korean army’s art of war was an extraordinary one which could not be measured by any military science of world-wide fame including the strategy of Sunji which enjoys wide recognition as the outstanding one from 2,500 years ago when it appeared until today. It is because the US army’s military science was considered to have achieved a new development through the Second World War in which various modern and excellent strategies were applied but it could not cope with the strategy of the north Korean People’s Army.

Sunji said, “to avoid the enemy’s strong point, hit his weak point.” But the north Korean army besieged the strong US divisional force in Taejon at the place and time which were utterly unthought of and thus hit the weak point of the US army and smashed its strong point. The north Korean army developed Sunji’s tactics of encircling the enemy and pursuing him after providing him with a loophole into the new ones of besieging and beating the American troops and annihilating them as they fled from ambush.

Considering that the American troops sustained such a crushing defeat like this it was rather natural that the south Korean army which was organized and trained by the US army and acting at its beck was defeated and took to flight. In this way, in the stuffy summer of 1950 everything was rapidly moving to the south on the Korean peninsula thick with powder smoke.

Around this time the 1st Army Corps conducted operations to withdraw from Andong.

The 8th Division under the command of our corps retreated rather maintaining its fighting power, without suffering big loss in its manpower and armaments and its commander Li Song Ga was on good terms with me, so there was nothing to worry about it. However, the Metropolitan Division led by Kim Sok Won who was a colonel of the Japanese army caused trouble in every matter. Kim Sok Won thought and acted all the time after the manner of Japan's "Samurai." Brandishing the Japanese sword, he would only shout "I'm here! Charge!" With a loud cry "If you retreat, you will be shot to death" he made the soldiers shudder with the terror of death. Although he knew only "Samurai"-style tactics and had no ability to cope with modern warfare, he painted himself out as an elder of the military.

One day wall papers that said "Andong is safe from all danger as long as there is General Kim Sok Won" appeared in every quarter of Andong where the corps command was stationed. At this the political instructors of the corps said that it was absurd and insisted, infuriated, on calling the matter to account. I calmed them down, saying that one of these days we should withdraw from Andong and that in these conditions they might be the object of ridicule so they should leave the matter as it stood.

Just as I had expected, the situation turned from bad to worse hourly. The US 8th Army Command airdropped the written operational order by a helicopter. The import of the order was that that day, under the cloak of night we should retreat from Andong and build the defensive positions on the southern shore of the Rakdong River before the sunrise of the next day.

We called out all staff officers to translate the operation order written in English and set the map of the corps command to the operation map of different scale and worked till late at night. Thus,

we could convey operation instructions to the divisions under our command. But the operation ended in a complete failure.

According to the plan of operations mapped out at that time, until the 8th Division retreated first through the bridge south of Andong and built the defensive positions on the southern shore of the Rakdong River the Metropolitan Division would cover it and then the former cover the latter's withdrawal. However, the withdrawal of the former was not covered by the latter. This inflicted a heavy loss on the former. The former was obliged to retreat covering for itself. The whereabouts of the latter was not known at all.

A few days later we located the Metropolitan Division. It disobeyed the order and gave up the covering task without notice and fled in secret before others. This represented the cowardly act of Kim Sok Won who had made a false show of power as if he were unrivaled in courageousness. The angry staff officers of the corps maintained to deal with under the article of war but I went no farther than informing through the written instructions the units under our command of it and letting them draw lesson from it.

After yielding Andong, the corps command took up a position in Kyongju and the 8th Division was quartered in Chachon and Uisong. At that time Divisional Commander Li Song Ga came to receive medical treatment owing to the exhaustion from successive battles and the corps commander ordered me to take over the 8th Division. After taking charge of the 8th Division, I let the Divisional Commander Li Song Ga's staff officers stay in office without exception. Officers and men became quite exhausted because for more than ten days they could not sleep at all, making a counterattack under the cover of planes according to the order at daytime and checking the attack of the north Korean army at night. One of those days I received notice from the Corps Commander Kim Hong Il that I should hand over the division to Li Song Ga and come to Kyongju.

I transferred the division and came to Kyongju. According to Corps Commander Kim Hong Il, Sin Song Mo and Chong Il Gwon came and told him that certain politicians lodged a complaint with President Syngman Rhee against letting the son of Choe Dong O who went over to north Korea command a division so he ordered

my dismissal. I did not know what it was all about, but without a word I headed to the Army Headquarters in Taegu. Chong Il Gwon apologized me and said that now things had come to this pass I should wait for an opportunity for some time.

While I was on the waiting list for a time, the situation of war grew more serious and the American and the south Korean troops were pressed hard and flocked in the limited area around Pusan.

The situation was hopeless.

Pusan was in utter confusion. Everybody was in despair and desperate to find the escape. High-ranking officers, dignitaries and men of wealth busied themselves in stowing away on a boat to Japan. But there were those who were in the dragnet. Certain Chang, the artillery commander, and some others were shot to death, and several narrowly escaped death with the backing of higher-ups of the US army.

I was in a miserable plight as I look back on it. What is that my father went to the north? What has become of other members of my family? Where should I stand? Without any office and unable to foresee even a bit with regard to my future destiny I was spending gloomy hours. It was really absurd and seemed a trick of fate that I was driven back to Pusan where I had set foot for the first time when I returned home full of emotion and hope after August 15 to complete long life abroad in exile.

### *The President's Letter Written on the Car*

President Syngman Rhee who urged over radio "Stubborn defence of Seoul" when the 38th parallel was got over and the north Korean army was pressing toward Seoul, fled to the south before citizens of Seoul were aware of it. The fleeing President who abandoned Seoul was very miserable. US Ambassador Muccio who got out of Seoul followed in quest of him. In Taejon he could meet President Rhee who was in the depths of despair.

Ambassador Muccio "needed to make the south Korean government survive until this war was handed over to Americans covertly" and "had to protect the Syngman Rhee government as a war carrier." This is because if the Syngman Rhee government collapsed Americans would lose the ground to assert "America's

justness” in the war. So, placating President Rhee who grumbled raving that the Americans “deserted” him, Muccio secured everything that was needed for the United States to wage the war. In other words, he saw to it that President Syngman Rhee and others were unable to interfere in the war and the fate of war was entrusted to the US military experts.

Needless to say, the south Korean army had been subordinated to the US army from the days of the American military government and after the setting up of the south Korean government this was legalized by the conclusion of several agreements.

As an instance, the “Transitional Provisional Administrative Agreement on Military Affairs and Security” which was concluded in August 1948 stipulated that the commander-in-chief of the US army in south Korea “maintains the right to organize, train and equip the south Korean army” and “continues to exercise the right of command over south Korean army till the completion of withdrawal of the US army.”

But, in the battlefields unlimited exercise of power was all the more needed. For this reason, Muccio demanded Syngman Rhee to hand over practically full power to carry on the war to the American side and President Rhee, too, wanted this.

So, on July 15, 1950 Syngman Rhee wrote a letter addressed to Marshal MacArthur on the car running to the south, which read in part: “...I deem it happy to have come to transfer all the rights of command as long as the war continues. This right of command shall be exercised by Your Excellency and by other commanders authorized by Your Excellency in Korea and Korean waters.” On July 18 Marshal MacArthur replied to the letter: “I regard it an honour to have come to command the courageous ROK army.” In this way all the right of command over the ground, naval and air forces of south Korea was completely transferred to the commander-in-chief of the US army.

Like this, the south Korean army became dependency to the US army and the war was actually pushed forward by it.

Viewed in the light of this fact, even if he had a long handle to his name such as “commander-in-chief of the three forces and the chief of general staff of the army,” Chong Il Gwon was no more



than an orderly conveying the orders of Commander Walker.

It was the chief of the US military advisory group who appointed me the president of the military academy and it was also the US 8th Army Command that ordered the retreat from Andong. As the commander of the 11th Division under the command of the US 9th Corps I was assigned the operational task to put down the Honam area and it was also the US 8th Army Command that approving my appointment as corps commander sent me to the rear, not on the front line, for the reason that I was politically problematic general.

My such cases alone are enough to show that the rights of personnel administration and operation and command were in the hands of American generals.

Military supply, too, was totally controlled by the US army. To refer to supply of shells alone, the south Korean army was always furnished much smaller than the US troops. So I often witnessed that the south Korean soldiers who were pressed harder than American soldiers by the north Korean army but had to counter with less firepower than the Americans fled in the midst of fight to the area which was under the support of firepower of the US troops.

In those days, I did not feel it strange that the system of command of the army was totally controlled by the US army. On the contrary I felt it rather natural in the actual conditions that the fate of the war was entrusted to it.

In fact, I thought at that time that we should defeat the north Korean army and for this we needed a powerful support of the US forces and that so to have and exercise the prerogative of supreme command was an indispensable requisite for the US army to bring the war to victory. Therefore I could not foresee at all that the agreement on the transfer of the prerogative of supreme command over the south Korean army which was brought about by the letter President Rhee wrote on his car on his way of refuge to Marshal MacArthur would exert a great influence on the destiny of our nation in the future.

Who could foreknow the fact at that time that the agreement on the transfer of the prerogative of supreme command which came into being due to the war has absurdly the legal effect even today when more than 30 years elapsed after the end of the war?

Today the world knows no country but south Korea that holds no prerogative of supreme command over its own armed forces.

It is not accidental that the Americans themselves call the south Korean army a “watch dog” or “mercenary.”

Such being the case, serving the south Korean army is insignificant though one thinks in one's way it is to serve our nation. This is because the south Korean army which is organized, trained and maintained by the United States and moves under the command of the American generals cannot go beyond the bound of guaranteeing the national interests of the United States and guaranteeing the national interests of the United States in south Korea presupposes abstaining from nationalism on the part of south Korean people.

Looking back on the days of war based on this fact, I could not but admit that I, too, became a cheap American “mercenary” and “watch dog” owing to the letter written by President Rhee on the car.

### *“New Korea” Operations*

The United States which had calculated that the dispatch of one or two divisions out of the US armed forces in Japan would suffice to crush the north Korean army without difficulty and pacify the whole area of north Korea with ease was deadlocked. Already, following the mobilization of the naval and air forces, huge armed forces including the 24th, 25th, the 1st Cavalry, 2nd and the 1st Marine Divisions were thrown into the Korean war. However, far from checking the southward advance of the north Korean army, they were driven into a limited area at the southern tip of the Korean peninsula.

When the war situation worsened to the utmost, the American and the south Korean armed forces were all thrown into defending the bridgehead of Pusan. And in order to check the advance of the north Korean army on the Rakdong River, intensive bombardment and bombing raids were made on an extensive scale. American troops poured so many bombs and shells that the water of the Rakdong River seemed boiling and the earth melting to flow.

While making desperate resistance, the MacArthur command in

Tokyo saw through that it was unable to stand the pressure of the north Korean army. So it gave Lieutenant General Walker, Commander of the US 8th Army in south Korea, the top secret instructions to work out the plan of withdrawal of the US troops from south Korea to Japan to make provision against the case the situation further aggravated and, at the same time, made him prepare with the utmost secrecy a plan to evacuate the south Korean key figures, army and police and other personnel whose number not much exceeded 360,000 in all, to Japan or other places.

This top secret plan called "New Korea" operations was supposed to be kept from the side of the south Korean government until immediately before it was put into practice. This is because if the secret slipped out, it might lead to terrible confusion.

But, although the secret was kept watertight, an extremely limited number of high-ranking generals of the south Korean army who were on intimate terms with some American military advisers got scent of it. I also knew slightly of the outline of the plan, though unable to grasp its particulars.

This plan was not brought into reality but I was greatly surprised to learn that according to the US secret documents which were brought to light after the passage of many years the plan of evacuation of leading personnel of south Korea called "New Korea" operations was being prepared in a scale several times greater than I had imagined at the time.

The confidential document "A file of documents on US diplomatic relations, 1951, South Korea and Communist China" which was made public by the US State Department, showed that when the war situation worsened to the extreme at the beginning of 1951 complete withdrawal of the US armed forces from the Korean peninsula was brought into serious discussion.

The plan of "New Korea" operations became concretized in the plan of withdrawal General Ridgway, Commander-in-Chief of the US armed forces in the Far East, sent on August 30, 1951 to the Chief of Staff of Army in Washington D.C. in the form of a reply to the July 6, 1951, document from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Those who would be withdrawn according to this plan were south Korean government officials, servicemen on active duty of land, naval and air forces, civilian component of the south Korean army and police,

south Koreans in the employ of the US 8th Army, public officials and their families, religious leaders and their families and leading professionals and their families. And they totalled 1,557,355.

As for the place where they should be withdrawn, Japan, too, was brought into discussion, but later islands on the Pacific were brought up for discussion and finally Sabai and Upoltu Islands of West Samoa south of the equator were chosen. Considering that viewed from climate and other conditions these islands were favourably located for the self-support of as many evacuees as were envisaged in the plan it was decided to place the south Korean refugee government there. This did not mean that the United States was going to give up Korean peninsula for good. I construe it as meaning that in the circumstances where the US military intervention was baffled by the strong offensive of the north Korean army on the Korean peninsula the United States wanted to justify itself on the calculation of making another attempt with renewed energies by making its own opportunities in the future.

Anyway this shows that after serious military defeat of the US army in the first stage of the war the US army authorities fully realized that contrary to what they had expected at first it could not conquer the north Korean army. At the same time it proves that in the conditions which all-round northward expedition following the landing operations at Inchon, too, ended in failure, they seriously discussed about an emergency measure.

I feel blue thinking that what had become of me if the US “New Korea” operation plan was brought into effect.

I feel like asking that the United States has the right to force upon other nations anything it likes for its own political purpose.

But at that time I was not quite aware of such secret plan and was overcome by apprehension and irritation in connection with the unforeseeable progress of the war. I was unable to see through why the destiny of our nation was toyed by the Powers, so I only thought over the grief of a small and weak nation.

## I Became a Commander of the Punitive Force

## *Tactics of "Fortifying the Walls and Clearing the Fields"*

The forceful offensive of the north Korean People's Army drove the US and south Korean armies into the cul-de-sac around Pusan. Despite the military and technical superiority of the US army, that is, its terrible bombardment and intensive air raids, the besiegement grew close along the Rakdong River and the despairing days continued.

The war situation began to ease when MacArthur's Command started landing operations at Inchon. The north Korean People's Army whose supply route was intercepted and was in danger of being encircled went over to evacuating operations. Pursuing the retreating People's Army counteroffensive was started all over the front line. The atmosphere of rivalry ran high in the military; everyone was eager to become commander of the vanguard troops, not missing the capital opportunity to distinguish oneself with military feats.

I, senior aide to Chong Il Gwon, was not pleased with my office. I entertained antipathy against the fact that those who had career of fighting against Japan were left in the lurch and put to a post of leisure. I strongly demanded to allot me to the post of front-line commander. However, somehow or other, those who had participated in the anti-Japanese movement or anti-Japanese war were not placed on this or that excuse as commanders on the list of the front-line advancing northward. Kim Hong Il, Li Jun Sok and I were excluded in this way. (In case of Mr. Kim Hong Il they pretexted that the American advisory group suggested replacing him with young man because he was too old and could hardly see the map without spectacles on.)

I made a request more than once, only to be offered the post of commander of the 11th Division which was not yet organized and was in name only. The 11th division replenished its commanding officers with the officers who had received medical treatment in the hospitals in the rear and enrolled recruits drafted by local military affairs departments. It got posted under the command of Lieutenant General Culter, Commander of the US 9th Corps. Culter assigned me the task to wipe out the guerrillas in the Honam areas.

I determined to build up the 11th division to be a first rate one.

This was out of my ill feeling toward those who wanted to degrade to second rate divisional commander and was an ambition coming from the consciousness of a professional military man. So, I concentrated my energies on training troops with emphasis on firing and march.

But, on the other hand, I had to push forward the operations for mopping up the guerrillas in the Honam area because if I neglected the operational orders I might be called to account for it.

Historically speaking, the Honam area was the cradleland of the Tonghak revolution and in the days of Japanese imperialist rule it was the fountainhead of the Kwangju students' movement. It came to be known widely by the mutiny in Ryosu and Sunchon. After the outbreak of the June 25 war the north Korean People's Army which was advancing southward swept over the Honam area. So it was understandable that the left-wing forces became active among the inhabitants of this area whose rebellious spirit was strong historically. As the north Korean army retreated and the UN forces went over to the counteroffensive, these left-wing forces unfolded the guerrilla activities with the mountain areas as the base of operations, and their number was estimated at that time to be about 40,000 or 50,000.

Carrying on the expedition, I employed the tactics, "Fortify the Walls and Clear the Fields." Because indefinitely making a running fight against the guerrillas who appeared and disappeared moving swiftly would not only exhaust the expedition forces but also possibly make them fall into the guerrillas' decoy and ambush to cause casualties exceeding in scale our military achievements. So I decided to guard strictly with key points as the bases and gradually pacify the neighbouring areas. This would make it possible to concentrate efforts on the training of the unit while avoiding the engagements between the both sides as far as possible. I wished inwardly that the local young people who had joined guerrillas would return home safely and engage in their occupation.

Whether they take part in expedition forces or the guerrillas, they are, after all, young people on whose shoulders rests the future of our nation. Then why should they shed blood, killing each other? So, with a view to steadily strengthening the combat power of the division I intensified training with emphasis on firing and march.

However, my mind was very complicated in those days. As for the character of this man, Choe Dok Sin as a human being, it must have taken on human touches together with foulness. I cannot say confidently which of them was disclosed more clearly. But, what I believed at least was that bloodshed was not the highest merit of the military and that fratricides in the war were not to be desired at all for the future of the nation.

Nevertheless, on the other hand, I wanted to render distinguished military services by giving full play to my military knowledge in the war. So, to this man called Choe Dok Sin two kinds of thoughts coexisted.

One day a young officer, commander of the antitank battalion which was assigned to me, came into the divisional commander's office and unexpectedly asked for leave. His facial expression was abnormal. I found out that his puckered-up face was suffused with an uncontrollable violent temper and excitement.

After looking around him for a while, I said to him calmly: "If there is a thing for which you have to take your leave, you may do. But I wonder if you can tell me what is the matter."

After hesitating for a while he spat out the words, according to which in his home village one of his family members was killed by villagers after the advance of the People's Army. It was one of the tragedies that usually took place in those days when conflicts between the left- and the right-wing were drastic.

People were killed on the charge of being either the leftists or on the contrary, the right-wing reactionaries. Even in a village they became enemies to each other and revenged on each other for this or that reason at each turn of the situation. As a result, bloodshed continued as retaliation took place through generations, forming a vicious circle.

To mention of the case of this young officer, it was certain that informed of the death of his kith and kin he also had a mind to take a bloody vengeance, though I was not sure whether it was related with his being an officer of the south Korean army.

So I told him quietly: "I fully understand your feeling. You may take your leave, and you may feel revengeful, viewed in the light of human nature. But, let us deliberate deeply with a broad mind. Do

you want to go now and take a bloody vengeance at all costs? If you do, you would immediately feel revenged, but that cannot settle the question. Isn't it that antagonistic relations will continue to develop? They are all living in the same village. When you look into the lineage of their families you may find you are connected with them somehow. Is it desirable that though they have to live long in the same village in the future, too, they pent up grudge against each other? You may feel relieved temporarily but can you have your mind at rest? In particular you should achieve a great thing with a great ambition in the future. So is it admissible for you to commit impulsively such a rash act which may spoil your future? I ask you to reflect profoundly and behave yourself."

He made no response to my persuasion. Saying that anyhow he would go home he left.

I was not sure whether he understood my words. I felt uneasy quite a bit not knowing how he who had rushed out with an enraged and agonizing look would conduct himself in his native place. Although he started off in a deadly spirit, he returned to his unit some time later and reported me that he had been to his native home uneventfully. Then he conducted his duties as usual. Under the wartime conditions in which many things occurred even in a day I had no time to think of his question for a long time and it slipped from my memory.

Since then many years had passed. After coming home released from long overseas service I met again the young officer unexpectedly. Already at this time he was not an officer below the rank of major who was under my command but a major general who held a considerably high office.

Recollecting the by-gones he said:

"...At that time I was out of my senses. I was prompted by a sheer desire to retaliate, then how could I follow your advice? No sooner had I been allowed to take my leave than I hurried to my native village. On my way I gained my composure somehow to think again about your advice. When, I, lost in thought, got to my native home, the atmosphere was disturbed as expected. Everyone only tried to read my mind.

"I had already been composed. I did not betray my emotions at



all and dealt with home affairs. At last I summoned the accomplices and told them to consign the bygones to oblivion and be careful so that mishaps might not occur again. Of course they made a great fuss crying in tears...

“Coming back to my unit with a heavy heart I thought much of our national sufferings.

“Nobody knows what might happen to this Yang X Jik if I acted rashly without following your advice at that time.”

He treated me as his old senior, and I heard with satisfaction what he had reminisced and was deeply moved. I gazed for long at him, a gentle, thoughtful and good-natured man, as if I were fascinated by him.

This is an additional account of a tragic event which occurred at the wartime when the discomfort index alone mounted.

### *The Kochang Incident and My Stand*

It is natural that man has recollections which will never fade through his life. Recollection can be something beautiful and sweet or otherwise pessimistic or awe-inspiring.

I have a painful, annoying and nightmarish recollection which can never and must not be faded until I breath my last. This is a recollection connected with the massacre of innocent people in Kochang which had once stirred up public opinion.

The Kochang incident was an anti-national and anti-popular case of horrifying criminal mass slaughter committed by a unit under my command when I as a commander of punitive force had my headquarters in Namwon.

The 9th Regiment that was once attached to the US 9th Corps which was advancing northward launching counter-offensive and followed it rejoined the 11th Division. With its headquarters in Chinju it came to exercise control over the mountainous areas west of South Kyongsang Province.

In the early morning of December 5, 1950 guerrillas made frequent appearance around Sinwon Sub-County, Kochang County, South Kyongsang Province and assaulted police substations, inflicting 30 odd casualties.

To cope with this, at the request of the South Kyongsang Provincial Martial Command, I stationed at Kochang County a force about 800 strong led by Major Han Dong Sok, Commander of the 3rd Battalion, 9th Regiment, 11th Division (Hwarang Unit) which was under my command.

In Kochang County the army committee for emergency measures was formed in each sub-county with the national association, the young men's association and government and public offices as a core, and through these committees some 600 *sok* of rice were gathered in from every household in four or five installments. Each sub-county was assessed firewood and so more than 300 *pyong* of firewood was piled up in the township. Radish, red pepper, *kimchi* pickles, soy sauce, bean paste, garlic and other subsidiary food which were worth 9 million *won* were delivered and presented. In the name of donation no small amount of money was scraped together from leave tobacco and rice dealers.

Moreover, the stationary troops burned over 1,200 dwelling houses in Puksang Sub-County on the ground that "it is inevitable strategically" and slaughtered plow oxen at random and ate them. And the army men carried polished rice by two trucks to market and sold off.

But, that they had inflicted serious damages on the inhabitants and committed violence to them in this way was nothing to what was done on February 10, 1951. On this day part of the 3rd Battalion advanced into Sinwon Sub-County and for the reason the police reported that the inhabitants of six villages including Taehyon, Waryong and Chungyu "had communicated secretly with the guerrillas" burned more than 700 dwelling houses and ferreted out 109 young villagers. And it took them to the Songtam valley and machine-gunned them to death, sparing three persons alone.

Not satisfied with this a few officers of the stationary troops, the head of Sinwon police substation, a detective of the Investigation Section of the Kochang Police Station and others herded more than 1,000 inhabitants who remained behind in the six villages into the playground of the Sinwon Primary School and sorted out of them the families of the army, police and government officials numbering about 500. Then after interning the remainder in the Yulwon Primary School four kilometres away from there they walked them

off to the Paksan valley and let two company strong military force shoot them for two hours to annihilate them. In addition, to destroy evidence they burned up the bodies by spraying gasoline and exploded the nearby mountain to bury them. Among the victims there were even old people of 70 and children of 3 or 4. Indeed, this was a terrible tragic event even brutes of men would be shocked at.

This fact was known later. At that time it was reported to the divisional headquarters merely as battle results of mopping out the appearing and disappearing guerrillas, so I paid no special attention to it.

But this incident was officially reported to Cho Byong Ok, Minister of Home Affairs, through the South Kyongsang Provincial Police Bureau to become at last a political question.

The National Assembly formed the committee for the investigation of the incident on March 30, 1951 and an inquiry commission left for Kochang. On the other hand, the Administration also stressed the need of its participating in the investigation in cooperation with the National Assembly and sent Colonel Kim Jong Won, the chief of the South Kyongsang Provincial Martial Law Civil Affairs Department as investigator officer specially appointed by the Minister of National Defence and Police Commissioner Chang Yong Bok of the National Police Headquarters as one specially appointed by the Minister of Home Affairs to Kochang in company with the National Assemblymen.

Kim Jong Won had a confab with Sin Song Mo, Minister of National Defence, already before he started as an investigator, and, moreover, at the request of Commander of the 9th Regiment Colonel O Ik Gyong devised a scheme to hush up the incident as much as possible.

Kim Jong Won gave an instruction that the south Korean soldiers should be disguised as guerrillas and lay in ambush beforehand on the steep mountain top between Namsan Sub-County and Sinwon Sub-County, Kochang County, and when the cars of investigation groups appeared they sprayed bullets with submachine guns around them.

Unaware of this secret scheme, the National Assemblymen came to the ambush and were subjected to fire; they raised a hue, yelling

terror-stricken, “What is all this?” Kim Jong Won, with the word that they could go no farther because guerrillas appeared, abandoned for the time being going to the actual place in Sinwon Sub-County and turned the cars back to the Kochang Police Station.

Attacked unawares, the members of inquiry commission were flurried and finished their investigation by hearing witnesses there.

The Chief of the Thought Control Section of the Kochang Police Station Yu Bong Sun acted shrewdly at that time. He instigated the witnesses who were to be met by the members of inquiry commission to give false evidence in this way: “More than 200 villagers were killed. They all conspired with guerrillas and there were neither old people nor children among them.”

As a divisional commander I dispatched a judiciary under my command to the scene to investigate the affairs. He submitted to me a report to this effect:

- A. Every villager in the area of Sinwon Sub-County, irrespective of age or sex, keeps his mouth shut with regard to the enemy’s movements and offered him food, money and goods, spelling a tragedy to the national history;
- B. The inhabitants who were killed wholesale on the charge of being hostile elements were mostly innocent people and even policemen’s family members were included in, though hostile elements were found among them occasionally, and the villagers entertained profound fear as to indiscriminate firings and had not confidence in the army at all;
- C. The opinion of inhabitants in and around the Sinwon Sub-County toward the stationary troops is very bad. In particular, people are enraged to hear that they raped women and plundered the inhabitants’ goods and that they even forced them to buy the things they looted from others;
- D. On March 10, 1951 or thereabouts, Major Han in the 9th Regiment called out more than 100 men under his charge and secretly deployed nearly 40 out of them on a height to strictly forbid local people’s access and made his about 100 men carry the bodies of the innocent people who were killed and left unheeded in Kojong-ri and Taehyon-ri, Sinwon Sub-County to the valley some two kilometres away from there and bury them in secret.

I was told that while they were in operation the National Assemblymen and local gentries wanted to make on-the-spot survey but they could not do as the guards fired magazine rifles.

I submitted this report to the Ministry of National Defence as it was without correcting a word. Sin Song Mo took no notice of my report. He informed Syngman Rhee that he had made on-the-spot investigation together with four persons including Provost Marshal Choe Gyong Rok and that “to have slaughtered innocent people is groundless and they have mopped up not innocent people but guerrillas.” This delighted the ear of Syngman Rhee. He believed this false report, not the opinion of the people or the resolution of the National Assembly.

This was how the matter appeared to be settled as “insignificant” as desired by conspirators.

However, getting wind of the affair foreign reporters collected news materials on the spot on Sinwon Sub-County. So, the brutality came to be known to the world through radio.

As things had come to this pass, the National Assembly again demanded fact finding, mentioning “social justice” and the “morality of the government.” Minister of Home Affairs Cho Byong Ok who got into a scrape requested Syngman Rhee to resolve in a hurry. But Syngman Rhee blew his top rather and sided with Sin Song Mo, saying, “You wish the Minister of National Defence go out of office but things will not work that way.” Then he blurted out: “When ministers work in cooperation with each other, things will go on smoothly. The honour of the ‘Republic of Korea’ was blighted internationally because three home, defence and justice ministers did not work together around the Kochang incident. So, you, three ministers, resign at once.” This vividly shows the Syngman Rhee administration represented ferocious one-man dictatorial regime.

In this way the three ministers came to retire from office, but even in these circumstances Sin Song Mo manoeuvred to buy off some national assemblymen through Chong Il Gwon in an attempt to avoid his responsibilities.

Here is a story of my experience. One day I went to Chong Il Gwon at his summons, to be told to meet Chief of Information Bureau Li Han Rim. Li Han Rim gave me one million *won* in cash

and ordered me to give it out to the assemblymen concerned to mitigate the affair. I received it in compliance with his order but I could not execute it. I determined to accept it as my division's expenses of operational information because the chief of information bureau handed it over to me, and brought it under the charge of information staff officer to be expended according to given items.

When the affairs were messed up in this way the Syngman Rhee administration could hoodwink people no longer and held a court martial on December 12, 1951. Regimental Commander O Ik Gyong and Battalion Commander Han Dong Sok were sentenced to penal servitude for life respectively and Kim Jong Won was condemned to three years' imprisonment. And Chong Il Gwon was released from his office of the chief of staff and I, too, from that of divisional commander.

Thus, the Kochang incident was seemingly settled after a full year.

Of course I was never mortified at my dismissal. Instead I felt deeply that I could not shirk my moral responsibility as a commander who committed a strategic blunder and misled men under my charge.

Many years have passed since then. I do not want to deliberately dig into the tragic Kochang incident which would be buried in a world of oblivion and make it a subject of discussion.

But, is it true that the Kochang incident has been finally settled? Who should be blamed for it? At this thought I am occasionally in agony passing a wakeful night.

Is this a question which can be solved simply by inflicting for some time corporal punishment on a regimental commander or a battalion commander? Just after three months Kim Jong Won was released from prison granted a special free pardon of Syngman Rhee and was again appointed as the Chief of the National Police Headquarters. Then O Ik Gyong and Han Dong Sok were set free and swaggered about.

And, on closer examination, one will find that Kochang incident is no more than a case which was known to the public and in fact many big and small cases like the Kochang incident arose

throughout the Korean peninsula engulfed in the flames of war. According to the report of inquiry commission of the National Assembly which was made after the April 19 Uprising the number of sufferers from similar cases was 2,892 in South Kyongsang Province, 2,200 in North Kyongsang Province, 524 in South Cholla Province and 1,028 in North Cholla Province and 1,878 in Cheju Province.

Indeed, tens of thousands of innocent people met tragic death throughout the war. Then how to soothe the spirits that are haunting in streets and villages, valleys and forests, fields and riversides?

Without condemning the outside forces and the reactionary cliques kowtowing to them who caused the tragedy of unparalleledly fierce fratricidal war and are even now hastening to enact such a tragedy again, all questions will remain unsolved.

### *Thinking Over the Fate of My Family*

Even at the news of the entry of the UN forces into Seoul I could not leave the operation region of the division. I was much worried about the fate of my family who had remained in Seoul after the start of the war. I asked my aide-de-camp to go and inquire for my family.

My family members came to me with him. I heard how things stood with them in my absence and came to know that a great change took place in their circumstances. My father and father-in-law had already gone over to the north as was expected.

Originally I esteemed and attended on them from the bottom of my heart and understood their political faith and standpoint. Both of them kept a thoroughgoing nationalist stand and were middle-of-the-roaders in the provisional government. After Korea was divided into the north and the south they belonged to the negotiatory group.

To take a glance at how things stood with political forces inside the provisional government in the days when it sought refuge in China, the Left- and Right-wings including those with President Kim Gu as a centre, Kim Yak San and his followers who belonged to the Blue Shirt Society, Li Bom Sok of Overseas Service of America,

anarchist Yu Rim, communist Kim Song Suk and others and the middle-of-the-road force including Kim Gyu Sik, Yu Dong Yol, Hong Man Ho, Choe Dong O, Kim Bong Jun and others were united for national liberation within the same framework but their ideas were different in many respects. I remember that it was middle-of-the-road force that worked hard, playing the part of adjustment in order to overcome the internal friction.

I recognize that this endeavours of middle-of-the-roaders served as the basis for realizing the north-south negotiation when after the August 15 collision between Right and Left aggravated and the north-south confrontation threatened to cause the eternal partition of the nation and a fratricidal civil war. It is not fortuitous that my father and father-in-law sided with the assertion of Kim Gu and Kim Gyu Sik on the north-south negotiation. It was quite possible that they set out on the northward trip prompted by these past records of theirs.

But my father's going over to the north was something incompatible with my position of divisional commander of the south Korean army. If I followed his political creed it would mean the end of my military life. There was no other way for me but to describe that my father and father-in-law did not volunteer to go over, but were taken by force, to the north.

I could brush off that question in this way but I was greatly surprised to hear the story of what my younger sister Jong Hwa had suffered.

After the People's Army entered Seoul triumphantly Jong Hwa who was the first year student of a university apparently took part in a certain leftist youth or women's organization and was active. She lived in this way under the rule of the People's Army, so she found herself in an awkward position when the UN forces entered following the withdrawal of the People's Army. Seen at such an angle that she was the daughter of a personage who had gone over to the north and a traitor who had sided with communists, there was no other way for her than facing a heavy charge. However, seeing either the People's Army entered or the UN forces entering Seoul Jong Hwa herself did not feel she was guilty so much as making her escape and also there was no place for her to flee to.

In the times of hostilities such dubious attitude is liable to invite



misfortune. The active agitator would not wait with folded arms for the things to take an unfavourable turn unless compelled by unavoidable circumstances, but would secretly escape or go underground beforehand. There were many cases where men standing on the fence who had the illusion that "I'd hardly be..." were victimized. Not a few people were disposed of summarily without the warrant of arrest or trial. The cases affected by personal grudge were not a few.

It was a happy feature of misfortune, I should say, that Jong Hwa was kept in a detention room of the police in such grave atmosphere. It can be said to be an irony of fate that she escaped death miraculously.

She had a slight hope of escaping death because although her brother was a divisional commander of the south Korean army she heard nothing from him after he had gone to the United States for study, and her father, once a noted figure of the provisional government, crossed over to the north some time ago.

I could imagine how disheartened and frightened Jong Hwa was.

The familiar voice came to the ears of Jong Hwa who was lying on the floor of the ward, utterly exhausted in mind and body. She raised her head and saw a high-ranking officer who made inquiries in the ward. Seeing the familiar face, she sat up abruptly. She felt a hope of saving her life to rise momentarily in her.

"Aren't you Dong Son's father?"

The officer looked at her dubiously, turning his head toward her, and asked, "Who are you?"

"I'm Jong Hwa..."

"Why, what's the matter with you?"

Thus the policemen were given good scolding and were ordered to release the younger sister of the divisional commander right away. Thus she was able to narrowly escape death and return home.

He was General Li Jun Sok, once a high-ranking staff officer of the national liberation army, whose family was on intimate terms with mine from the days back in China. Mr. Li Jun Sok took over the command of the 3rd Division when I left for the United States

for study, and when the UN forces entered Seoul, he was appointed the metropolitan garrison commander. Mr. Li first inspected police stations and examined prisoners there lest the innocent people should suffer.

Hearing this story, I pondered. I could not leave my family in Seoul even in consideration of Jong Hwa. The situation was so unstable that no one could tell how it would suddenly change. It was impossible for me to take my family along with me in the war situation, nor could Mr. Li Jun Sok or I look after them. So I decided to evacuate them for the time being to the Cheju Island far off the main land, the safe rear.

It goes without saying that I managed to send my family to the safety zone “owing to” my influential position in those days as a divisional commander. The common people were subjected to all sorts of disasters and sufferings under the heavy burden of war, and it would have been inconceivable for them to seek suitable refuge.

Setting this aside, it must be not only the case with my family that one family, separated into the north and south, had heard nothing from each other and did not know whether the others were alive or dead. Such tragic fate did not befall any individual families alone. More and more families have suffered tragic forced separation since the erection of the 38th parallel barrier and especially since the hostilities.

I should say this is the throes of our lamentable national history.

## “Hero of Panmunjom”

*“What Delegate?”*

The armistice negotiation came to a stalemate in the second half of 1952 and was in a long recess. The seat of the delegation of the south Korean army on the UN forces side in the negotiation remained vacant after Li Han Rim was appointed the commander of the 9th Division. It became most likely that the ceasefire negotiations would be reopened after Eisenhower who had won the presidential elections in 1952 by giving commitment to end the Korean war returned having inspected the Korean front in the

winter of the same year. Under such circumstances the south Korean army delegate was nominated to the vacancy in March 1953. At that time I occupied the post.

After I was relieved of my office as divisional commander on account of the Kochang incident, I was ordered to be on standby at the army headquarters before I held successively the posts of the deputy president of the military staff college and the rector of the infantry academy and then resided in Tokyo as a member of the group of the liaison officers of the south Korean army in January 1953.

The post of the delegate of the south Korean army was successively held by Paek Son Yop, Li Hyong Gun, Ryu Jae Hung and Li Han Rim, and I was the fifth.

The delegate of the south Korean army was such in name only and was in no position to represent the will of the south Korean government, for he had been appointed by the Commander-in-Chief of the UN forces to follow the directives of the UN forces side and not allowed to contact the south Korean government side. Such practice went against the grain with me. If the delegate of the south Korean army takes a seat in the meeting with a vacant face and cannot utter a single word without having the directives of his government as my predecessors did, how can he be called the delegate of south Korea?

I did not want to be a puppet. I made up my mind to meet President Syngman Rhee who had been opposed to the truce negotiations conducted by the US army side.

At that time the President was staying at his villa in Chinhae. I flew to Chinhae. I rang up Chang Gi Bong of the presidential secretariat and asked him to arrange my interview with the President. Secretary Chang was my old acquaintance to whom I was introduced by Mr. Pak Hyon Uk who helped our family. He willingly consented. Having made an appointment to see him the next day, I pondered over all night.

The next day I was received by Dr. Rhee at the presidential reception room through the offices of Secretary Chang.

"I'm Major General Choe Dok Sin. I have come to meet Your Excellency as I was appointed as the delegate to the Panmunjom

negotiations.”

“What delegate?”

“Although the nomination of the delegate is in the hands of General Clark, I am a Korean serving in the south Korean army. I should like to take instructions from Your Excellency before taking office.”

Dr. Rhee’s countenance which was stiff instantly softened and invited me to be seated. When I sat opposite to him he spoke for nearly half an hour to the following effect:

“The senior delegate of the armistice negotiations should be the Korean like you.” “The anti-communist POWs who do not want to return should not be sent back” and “The truce should presuppose the withdrawal of the communist Chinese army.”

When he paused, I said:

“I understand that Your Excellency means: First, why is the senior delegate the American? He must be the south Korean armyman. The north Korean side is headed by Nam Il, isn’t it?

“In my opinion it would be good not to argue the question of the senior delegate at the present. Americans acted as the chief delegate so far and Your Excellency voiced Your Excellency’s discontent at that, so they are answerable for the affair of the past, aren’t they? Now it is unfeasible for the south Korean side to act as the senior delegate, nor this would be acceptable for the north Korean side and may furnish a pretext for breaking off the negotiations.”

Dr. Rhee remained silent and made no remark.

Concerning the truce negotiations, President Syngman Rhee actually often went to the extremes at variance with the US side, as an old saying goes, “The blind takes the lead,” and caused troubles to it, acting surly.

Then I referred to the next question.

“As for the question of the POWs, upholding Your Excellency’s intention, I will insist that proceeding from the humanitarian standpoint the POWs who refuse to return should never be sent back.

“As for the third question, I will bear in mind Your Excellency’s view that truce is feasible only when the communist Chinese army

is completely withdrawn.”

As I had concluded my remark, Dr. Rhee said, “Try and do your best. Mind my words, you must not return without winning.”

The interview was successful as I wished. My words seemed to have pleased Dr. Rhee. I, too, was pleased. On my arrival in Munsan-ri from Chinhae, I found that Colonel Li Su Yong was busy acting as a liaison officer in charge of the exchange of invalid soldiers between the two sides. I told him about recent happenings and asked about the ceasefire negotiation. He said that the negotiation was expected to reopen a little later than scheduled. Finding that I had time to spare, I flew to Tokyo. When I asked for an interview with Commander-in-Chief Clark, he readily received me.

At the interview I frankly told him that I had met President Syngman Rhee before arriving here. To my surprise, he was already informed of it. Thus began my interview with Commander-in-Chief Clark.

“I am appointed by you as one of the delegates, but I think that I, an officer of the south Korean army, should represent the will of the south Korean government. Please let me know your opinion.”

“I see. The preceding delegates of the south Korean army were not allowed to contact the south Korean government or ministry of defence. From now on I authorize you to report to your government, explain its stand and receive instructions from it. In this connection, you may expect my protection in case trouble arises.”

“Thank you. I understand that you authorize me to act as a delegate of south Korea from her standpoint.”

I sent President Rhee a written report on my interview with General Clark. I heard that President Rhee did not quite believe my report. I supposed that what I had written in my report was confirmed later when General Clark met President Rhee and reaffirmed by my activity at the ceasefire negotiation. For this reason, whenever I asked for an interview, President Syngman Rhee willingly received me.

In early April I attended the truce negotiations for the first time. At the council of war, Lieutenant General Harrison, senior delegate

of the UN side, briefed us on the agenda of the day and the content of the statement to be made. At half past ten we left by helicopter. When it flew over the Rimjin River, Lieutenant General Harrison explained how tank units were deployed and that they were on standby to protect us, should emergency arise.

Just before eleven sharp, the delegates of the both sides entered the meeting hall and took their seats without exchanging greetings. The UN flag and the flag of the Republic, the north side, were set up opposite to each other in the middle of the long table covered with green tablecloth.

In the middle of the opposite side General Nam Il was seated, on his right the delegate of the communist Chinese army sat facing me and the rest of the seats were taken up by major generals of the People's Army. In the middle of our side sat Lieutenant General Harrison, on his right a US admiral and a US general, and on his left I, Choe Dok Sin, and a general of the US air force.

Behind Lieutenant General Harrison sat First Lieutenant Underwood who acted as translator into Korean, and First Lieutenant U, a Chinese-American, who was a translator into Chinese. Behind General Nam Il sat two Koreans on both sides who acted as translators into English and Chinese respectively.

On the opposite side all were north Koreans except the delegate of the communist Chinese army, who all belonged to the yellow race, but our side all were American officers belonging to the white race except me.

At the meeting Lieutenant General Harrison spoke in English which was translated into Korean by First Lieutenant Underwood and then into Chinese by First Lieutenant U. The senior delegate of the opposite side proudly spoke in Korean, which was translated by north Korean officers into English and then into Chinese.

I felt that this all hurt our national sentiment, but I could not help it.

The repeated translation of the same speech was boresome to me who know the three languages. But I had to keep silent like a deaf and dumb person. What the deuce am I? Such a sense of disgrace rising within me harassed me.

When I unbosomed my feelings to Colonel Li Su Yong, he told

me sadly with a serious face what he had experienced.

He said he was put to shame when he, as the liaison officer of the UN forces side, met his counterpart from the opposite side for the first time. He had to speak in English to his counterpart as provided, which was translated into Korean by First Lieutenant Underwood.

First Lieutenant Underwood was the grandson of Dr. Underwood, the American missionary who founded the Yunhui College and was its director.

When the grandson of Dr. Underwood finished his translation into Korean, the liaison officer of the north Korean army jeered at Li Su Yong by asking “Why do you Korean speak in a foreign language, instead of Korean? Don’t you know Korean?” He was at a loss for an answer and spat out on the impulse of the moment: “It is free for us to speak in any language since we live in the free world.”

He himself felt very awkward at this. When the north Korean liaison officer gazed at him with a scornful yet compassionate glance he felt as if his cheeks burned and a cold sweat streamed down his back.

He beat a hasty retreat but could not but feel the sense of national disgrace for long.

His story made me blush with shame.

“Freedom” of speech in the free world sounds nice but what a national disgrace the “freedom” means!

They call it “freedom” that compatriots are compelled to express themselves in English, a foreign language, instead of in their own language, speaking to each other. What a nonsense!

I was indignant at this, but could not blame Colonel Li Su Yong alone, for I was in a position little different from his.

I, the representative of the south Korean army, could not address a single word to the compatriots using the same language, although they were enemy, militarily, leaving everything to the American officers who spoke in English.

I little differed with Colonel Li Su Yong in loss of national pride. I think this affords an evidence that the US army did not believe the south Korean army (south Koreans).

I was in agony finding no vent for my surcharged heart which reflected the sense of national disgrace.

### *Dispute with Harrison*

I had a bitter quarrel with the senior delegate Lieutenant General Harrison twice till I created a big stir in the world by boycotting attendance to the armistice negotiation after I had attended it in the capacity of the delegate of the south Korean army on the UN forces side.

Until then the delegate of the south Korean army had no right whatsoever and had only an ornamental existence. None of my predecessors dared to lay the view of the south Korean government before the senior delegate of the US army, and was allowed to meet even President Rhee. Telephone call from Panmunjom to Seoul was prohibited for fear of the leakage of secret.

I was indignant at this situation out of the sense of national disgrace. I was loath to be obsequious to anyone for no reason. It may be said to be my soldierly temperament.

So I was determined to refute incoherent remarks. Here is an instance.

The both sides were conducting a bitter controversy on the question of the POWs without yielding to each other. At the council of war senior delegate Harrison who had taken the offensive against north Korea, holding fast to the former position up to the previous day said that he would advance a new proposal which meant a change of position.

Nonplussed at this, I asked:

“Was this proposal approved by our government?”

“It is the concern of Commander-in-Chief Clark and we only obey the directives.”

“Our government does not seem to consent to this proposal. I have not received instructions to that effect. Give me time. I will report.”

Harrison looked surprised and embarrassed. He broke off the meeting and left. When he came back after making a phone call he declared that he would submit the new proposal a day later.



General Nam Il who expected a new proposal that day was offended. The meeting ended without progress that day.

I met Dr. Syngman Rhee and told him what had happened that day and that General Clark would call on him for the matter.

Later General Clark met Dr. Rhee and tried to persuade him but the latter showed stubborn opposition.

The truce negotiation showed no progress. On the fourth day, on May 16, three days' recess was proposed reportedly on the directions from above, and the negotiation was adjourned again.

I watched the movements of the high-placed officers of the UN forces command in regard to the new proposal. Every morning I rang up Harrison and asked whether he had received any directions from Washington.

In view of the resumption of the negotiation, on May 25 after a recess of more than a week I accompanied General Clark to Seoul the previous day.

On the plane, he said to me, "We will be met by reporters in the airport. Let me interview them."

"General, are you coming with the new proposal?"

"Yes, but I did not make it known even to our senior delegate. I will directly explain its substance to President Rhee."

"It seems unfavourable to south Korea. What about it?"

"The world public wants armistice. Opposition to it will invite isolation."

"I don't want to concern myself with such political problem. I only want to report to our government."

"As I have just told you, I will directly speak to President Rhee."

He evaded telling me of it to the last.

I got off the plane at the Yoido airport and headed for Munsan-ri where the UN delegation was quartered. On my arrival there I called up Kyongmudae (name of presidential residence) and informed that General Clark would go there with the directions from Washington. On his arrival in Munsan-ri General Clark consulted with Lieutenant General Harrison there but did not meet Dr. Rhee.

The next day after breakfast Lieutenant General Harrison summoned Colonel Murphy and informed him that the council of war would be held at a quarter to ten that day. Feeling it strange that the council which had usually been opened at eight sharp, was adjourned, I visited Lieutenant General Harrison in his quarters at eight and found him reading the Bible leisurely. I asked him, "Why is the council of war put off?"

"It is to ensure the secrecy about the proposal."

"Can't it be made known to me?"

"No. It can't. Even the chief of staff is not informed about it."

"I suppose the proposal is more unfavourable to us. What about it?"

"The world public strongly demands truce. We cannot go against it."

We continued to argue.

"It is a matter of concern for high-ranking politicians but not of mine. I must know it, for I, as a man of affairs, am duty bound to report to our government beforehand."

"You will learn about it at the council of war."

Entreaty and tricks were lost on him. I found it boresome and irritating to wait, coming out after meeting with a rebuff.

I rang up Kyongmudae. I was told that General Clark made an appointment to see him at ten. It seemed queer that he appointed the time just before the beginning of the armistice talks.

At that time my mission was strengthened with Brigadier General Li Ho, Air Commodore Kim Chang Gyu, and Rear Admiral Kim Il Byong. I discussed the matter with them, but no bright idea came to us. Then I attended the council of war at a quarter to ten. Briefing on the agenda of the day was usually laid in front of each delegate, but there was nothing that day. I became more impatient. Lieutenant General Harrison declared the council of war open and let Colonel Murphy read the briefing on the agenda of the day. He read it so fast in English that I could hardly follow him, for I was not quite at home in English.

But I barely managed to catch the meaning of the passage concerning the withdrawal of the proviso "The aforementioned

clauses are not applicable to the POWs of the south Korean army, the proviso we insisted on the question of POWs until May 16. I attacked Harrison.

“You have long quarrelled with the opposition side on this question, and I suggested you in advance not to yield. What is all this? We cannot agree. Allow me a day at least.” I asked him to allow me to report to the government.

But Harrison said “No” successively. He warned: “From today we will have a closed meeting. Talking over the phone is prohibited since it might be tapped. The agenda must be kept secret.”

Enraged, I banged my fist on the table springing to my feet and declared that I would not take part in the talks under such circumstances.

When I was back in my quarters, it was just 10 o'clock. All were impatiently waiting for me. When I rang up Kyongmudae at once, Defence Minister Sin Tae Yong answered the phone. I briefed him on the proceedings of the council of war and informed him of my resolve not to attend the truce negotiation. I hung up and waited. Minister Sin rang me up a little later. He said that he reported to the President about me and the latter gave the instructions to the effect that Major General Choe should take part in the talks. It dawned on me that it was the time for General Clark to meet President Rhee.

I replied that I would act on my own discretion, even if I should answer for this later.

At around half past ten Lieutenant General Harrison went out of his way to see me in my quarters and urged me to go with him. I held fast to the attitude of non-attendance I had made clear saying “No.” Remaining in my quarters, I was very impatient and anxious. I sent Colonel Li Su Yong to see the progress of the talks, although he was reluctant to go.

Some time later I had a phone call from Harrison. He urged me to come, saying that he had sent a helicopter for me. I said “No” again, showing an adamant attitude.

In this way I disputed with Lieutenant General Harrison until just before the opening of the armistice talks. But I could not make the Washington's new directive be withdrawn.

*“A Prize Must Be Awarded to You!”*

When I was sitting in my quarters after having declared boycott of the talks things were going on as scheduled in Panmunjom. When Lieutenant General Harrison alighted from helicopter reporters surrounded him and asked him successively why Choe Dok Sin, the former delegate of the south Korean army, was not seen.

Harrison said evasively: “When I was flying here General Choe was on the phone. He will come soon as I sent a helicopter for him.”

Until 11 o’clock I did not appear. So they had to begin the talks, leaving my seat vacant.

In a moment the news was flashed all over the world from Panmunjom.

“The delegate of the south Korean army boycotted the talks,” “The senior delegate of the UN forces side advances new proposal on POWs’ question!” “The south Korean delegate boycotted this!”

Sensational news kept flashing through the air. In this way I became a topic of the world.

The north Korean side said that they would study Harrison’s proposal, so the meeting recessed.

When I was informed of such progress of the talks by the liaison officer Li Su Yong, I went straight to Kyongmudae. It was a warm day. The garden of Kyongmudae was wrapped in a leisurely and peaceful atmosphere unlike the desolate scene of this territory smothered in battle smoke.

President Rhee was comfortably sitting in a rattan chair under the shade of a tree in the garden, accompanied by Foreign Minister Pyon Yong Tae and Defence Minister Sin Tae Yong. When I reported to the President, he half closed his eyes, whether he was looking at me or not.

He suddenly asked me:

“You have taken part in the talks today, haven’t you?”

“I have not.”

“Um?!”

“I told Defence Minister Sin that I would not.”

“I told you to take part in it.”

“Yes, sir. But I did not on my discretion.”

“Then, it’s disobedience to orders.”

“I believed any south Korean officer would have refused under the then circumstances. If Your Excellency had known the circumstances, Your Excellency would have not told me to participate in it.”

The President rose from his seat and came up to me. I was stiffened, but he praised affectionately, patting me on the shoulder. “I must not punish you but award a prize to you.” In a moment my heart thumped with the joy of success.

Presently the President conducted me to the parlour hugging my shoulders affectionately and praised me over and over. My strained mind seemed to relax at once. My insignificant passive resistance to the US army authorities which had hurt my national feeling helped win President Syngman Rhee’s favour, as I expected inwardly. However, at that time I did not know why my behaviour greatly pleased the President.

Later I learned from the presidential entourage that when I was fighting a tug of war with Harrison with utmost effort, the President was having a risky political showdown with General Clark at Kyongmudae.

“To believe what General Clark have said today, the war cannot be won. Does it mean a defeat in the war?”

“No.”

“Then what is it?”

“Now we must make a truce.”

“Then let us ask Field Army Commander General Taylor, ‘Do you agree to the truce?’ If he agrees, it means surrender. It cannot be helped. I must give an explanation to the nation, so I must get a written explanation from you.”

Then he raised a fuss, calling in his secretary and sending for a typewriter. Embarrassed at this, General Clark and General Taylor rose from their seats and made a hasty retreat on plea that some pressing matter was waiting them at the front.

The US army side which was harassed by the resistance of

President Rhee tried everything, now intimidating and now humoring him, but things did not go as it expected. It was evident to the US army side that President Rhee's bigotry was nothing but a bluff but it embarrassed the United States in no small measure. President Syngman Rhee was sure that the Americans would never give up their vested rights in south Korea under any circumstances, so he tried to extort guarantee from the United States resorting to perverse behaviour and wily tricks. He clamoured for the unification through north expedition, roused public sentiments against the truce and saw that government-backed anti-US rallies were held frequently. In addition, he applied pressure on them.

First, he threatened the prerogative of supreme command over the south Korean army which was in the hands of the US army. Syngman Rhee used to say that in case the US army concluded an armistice, he would fight north Korea singlehanded, withdrawing the south Korean army from under the command of the UN forces.

Secondly, he sought to break up the truce negotiations by calling back the delegates of the south Korean army. I was to play the part.

Thirdly, it was to set free so-called anti-communist POWs unilaterally.

The US side is said to have been unaware of the third step, for President Syngman Rhee hinted vaguely at it as "some measure." This incident surprised the world public.

As for the release of the anti-communist POWs, I got wind of Syngman Rhee's ulterior design when I met him upon my appointment as the south Korean army delegate to the truce negotiations. On the other hand, I, as a soldier, had a mind to vent my spite on Harrison for the insult he offered me at the council of war in connection with the question of POWs.

So, at the beginning of June, a few days after my boycott following dispute with Harrison, I consulted with Provost Marshal Won Yong Dok, Home Minister Chin Hon Sik, Head of Public Information Bureau Kal Hong Gi about the matter at a restaurant in the back street of Chongno.

After consultation Chin Hon Sik and I, leaving Won and Kal to stay there, went to Kyongmudae to inform Syngman Rhee of the matter.

It was about 7 o'clock, far past the office hours, but Syngman Rhee himself met us in the vestibule.

Chin was the first to speak.

“Your Excellency, we have discussed release of the anti-communist POWs. American troops are in charge of the POWs, but it is our MPs who actually keep guard over them. We are fully able to release them if we want.”

Syngman Rhee looked very much satisfied, but did not speak immediately.

Chin went on to say:

“It must not be known to the Americans. Even the Defence Minister must be kept in the dark. If Your Excellency gives instructions to the person Your Excellency trusts, he will surely manage to release them.”

Syngman Rhee smiled and glancing at Chin and me in turn, whispered as if afraid of other's ears.

“Who do you think is fit for the job?”

“We think you can let Provost Marshal Won do it.”

“Um! Then let him come to see me tomorrow.”

“When will it fit for Your Excellency's convenience?”

“Tell him to come at eight in the morning.”

Coming out of the Kyongmudae, Chin and I went back to the restaurant where Won and Kal were waiting for us and deliberated on the matter again.

The next day Won Yong Dok, elated, prepared a paper to the effect that “From today the military police of the ground, sea and air forces shall be placed under the command of Provost Marshal Lieutenant General Won Yong Dok” and submitted it to Syngman Rhee, who wrote on it: “Approved by Syngman Rhee.”

Showing the paper to the heads of MPs of the services, Won set free 27,000 anti-communist POWs on June 18 as scheduled and Chin Hon Sik instructed the police under his command to give shelter to the released POWs.

It goes without saying that the incident threw the senior delegate of the north Korean side into a rage in the talks and Lieutenant

General Harrison, finding himself in an awkward situation, had taken great pains in pleading that the US army side was not responsible for the incident, alleging that “south Korea is a sovereign state.”

Eisenhower who was taken aback invited Syngman Rhee over but the latter declined on the plea of pressure of his work. So he had to send Walter Roberts, Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs of the State Department, to south Korea as his special envoy on June 25.

The United States much feared that the truce negotiations might come to a rupture because of the release of anti-communist POWs. Because to the United States the Korean war was an unpopular war with no prospect of victory and the Korean front presented a large bog which swallowed up a host of men and officers of the US army. In addition it swallowed up a huge amount of materials like a bottomless jar. The Americans strongly claimed to end the war so that their sons and husbands may return home alive from this horrible pitfall. The world public, too, called for peace.

So Eisenhower who desperately fought the war of aggression on Korea by the so-called “Eisenhower offensive” and the like had to give the election pledge that “If I am elected, I will visit south Korea to end the war.” As he had won the election taking advantage of this nationwide claim he had to make efforts for the success of the truce negotiations.

It should be made clear here that at that time the armistice itself did not provide for the pullout of the US troops from the Korean peninsula and that it did not hinder the United States from maintaining pro-US government in south Korea and exercising the prerogative of supreme command over south Korean army. In other words it was the policy of the United States to conclude armistice if it does not go against its Far Eastern strategy for keeping the Korean peninsula as the bridgehead.

But the case was different with President Syngman Rhee. He was in a very difficult position politically. He was unpopular among the nation as well as in the National Assembly. Since his dictatorship was constantly menaced, Dr. Rhee found it necessary to lead the people aspiring after national reunification with the slogan of the unification through north expedition and camouflage his



subservience to the United States with a gesture towards acting independently. He purposefully laid obstacles to the armistice policy of the United States with an eye to extorting a number of guarantees for his stay in power from it, taking advantage of the stand of the United States which did not want to renounce its vested rights in south Korea.

The both sides proceeded from their respective policies, and General Clark and the President's special envoy Roberts tried to persuade President Rhee, while the latter, availing the opportunity for political arrangements with the United States, agreed not to interfere with the truce negotiations any longer, provided the United States complies with his requests for the reinforcement of the south Korean army in strength and equipment, the conclusion of the south Korea-US mutual defence treaty and economic aid and the like.

But at that time I failed to analyze the situation in this way and took an attitude of disobedience to President Rhee's directive which told me to take part in the ceremony for the signing of the armistice agreement to be held in Munsan-ri on July 27. I insisted that other person should be sent there if necessary as I had no mind to attend it.

But Dr. Rhee urged me to attend, saying "If you do not attend the Americans do not trust my promise. Attend it, knowing that I promised them to observe the armistice agreement and not interfere with it for three months." I sensed that I should. I attended in the "capacity of observer" as I had declared boycott previously.

When I arrived at the signing hall, the delegates from the belligerent countries were present there. I took my seat just behind the seat of General Clark. After a little while General Clark appeared, accompanied by the commanders of the US ground, sea and air forces in the Far East.

It took a long time to sign 16 documents. Having affixed his signature, General Clark rose and first shook hands with me without a word before he left the hall.

When the signing ceremony was over, reporters surrounded me and asked me about my impression, taking a flash. "Today I observed the scene of signing in the capacity of observer," I said

and wormed my way through them.

Later Syngman Rhee called me the “hero of Panmunjom.”

### *“Operation Ever-Ready”*

The armistice agreement was concluded two years and 17 days after the opening of the negotiations.

At first glance the attitude of President Syngman Rhee who had been dead set against the truce seemed to be anti-American, but in essence did not swerve from executing the Far Eastern policy of the United States. Because none of President Syngman Rhee’s backlashes called for the alteration of the Far Eastern strategy of the United States.

All the unfeasible claims of President Rhee such as the unification through north expedition, the withdrawal of the communist Chinese troops and the disarmament of the north Korean army were in line with the objectives pursued by the US army side which actually played the leading part in the Korean war.

As for the unilateral release of anti-communist POWs, the US army side only feared that it might bring the armistice negotiations to a rupture, but it had no intention to deliver them to the north Korean side.

The United States made believe that it was obliged to comply with President Syngman Rhee’s insistent request for the conclusion of the south Korea–US mutual defence treaty, the reinforcement of the south Korean army and the modernization of its equipment, but it actually wanted them.

By so doing has the United States secured a strong military bridgehead, an advance base in the south of the Korean peninsula and thus reaped big fruition which was inconceivable in the prewar situation.

Viewed in a wider context, President Syngman Rhee’s conduct and my activity as his assistant were subservient to executing the Far Eastern strategy of the United States.

What irritated and alarmed the United States was President Syngman Rhee’s threat that if his demands are not met he will take back the prerogative of supreme command over the south Korean

army and act independently. The US army side knew that this was only a bluff on his part, but got prepared for all emergencies. This was dubbed “Operation Ever-Ready.” To summarize it in essence was something like the plan of coup d’état which envisaged removal of Dr. Syngman Rhee whenever he was considered to be an obstacle to the execution of the US basic policy and installation of an out-and-out pro-American in the south Korean government. In 1952 President Syngman Rhee illegally arrested and imprisoned opposition National Assembly men and carried out constitutional revision for his long-term office. This aggravated political crisis extremely when the Truman Administration, on the one hand, gave a warning to him through diplomatic channel, and, on the other hand, worked out a plan to force President Syngman Rhee out of office by dint of armed force. “Operation Ever-Ready” was a revised version of this plan, that is a hard-line operational plan.

This plan was worked out by Maxwell Taylor, Commander of the US 8th Army in south Korea, at the bidding of General Clark of the Far East Command in Tokyo. It envisaged measures to meet emergencies such as the case when President Rhee actually withdraws the south Korean army from under the command of the UN forces.

“Operation Ever-Ready” reckoned with three possible cases and measures to counter them.

First, in case the south Korean army disobeys the UN forces, it deems it necessary to call out the UN forces to guard the key points around principal cities, alert the sea and air forces and make intelligence agents keenly watch the movements of the south Korean army and government.

Secondly, in case the south Korean army acts independently, it is necessary to call back defence troops to guard the bases, disarm the south Korean security forces and replace them with reliable troops of the UN forces and control the movement of the inhabitants.

Thirdly, in the extreme case where the south Korean army and people are openly hostile to the UN forces, they are to take radical steps against them.

Commander-in-Chief Clark reported the radical measure to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on May 27, 1953. Its outline is to invite

President Rhee from the temporary capital of Pusan to Seoul or to other local town and let the commander of UN forces enter Pusan, arrest five to ten bigwigs who sympathized with his dictatorial acts and take over the command of the martial law from the chief of the general staff of the south Korean army. In case President Rhee disobeys, he is to be put under arrest and the UN command is to form a new government. When this does not turn out as they wish, a military government is to be established under the direct command of the south Korean army or the UN forces.

The operational plan specified in “The Plan of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for 1976/373 (July 5, 1953)” was examined by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the State Department and then by Secretary of State Dulles and Secretary of Defence Wilson. In a word, the two secretaries gave instructions to the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the effect that Commander-in-Chief Clark was “to take necessary steps to ensure coordination of the troops in case of pressing emergency,” and thus approved the scheme to oust President Syngman Rhee. I heard say that Paek Son Yop, the then Chief of the General Staff of the south Korean army, was summoned to the US Defence Department and assented to the scheme.

This extraordinary step was not taken because President Syngman Rhee conceded the demands of the UN forces side in the last stage, but this clearly shows what position the United States holds in south Korea.

“Operation Ever-Ready” shows who held the actual power of determining the form of the south Korean government in the whole period of the US army’s presence in south Korea from August 15 liberation up to the present.

The operational plan existed not only in the war days of 1952 or 1953. The part the US ambassador to south Korea played in compelling President Syngman Rhee to resign office at the time of the April 19 popular uprising, the May 16 military coup and the December 26 incident of President Park Jung Hee’s assassination—all this seems to prove the existence of “Operation Ever-Ready.”

By the way, I am really surprised at the thought of what would have become of me if in 1953 President Syngman Rhee had insisted on his point and “Operation Ever-Ready” had been put into effect. To look back now, when I, unaware of this, swaggered about,

encouraged by President Syngman Rhee's compliments, I was on the dangerous thin ice.

When I held a sinecure as a member of the liaison officers group of the Tokyo Command after the ceasefire, I intimated to the President my wish to take command of a front line unit.

Thus I was appointed corps commander. On the stage of approval by the US army command, I was considered not fit for the 2nd Corps in Chunchon on the front line since I was a "political general" and was put in charge of the 1st Corps, the reserve of the US 8th Army.

While I, lieutenant general, was corps commander I was often sent abroad on special mission given by President Syngman Rhee and later I was formally appointed as south Korean minister to Viet Nam. Thus I left the military service.

The hostilities of June 25 brought untold misfortunes and disasters on our people. It was a terrible catastrophe to our people both in the north and south.

The fierce war of over three years did not put an end to the territorial division and national split, but aggravated the atmosphere of confrontation between the north and south and the Korean peninsula has become a dangerous powder keg which might spark another war at any time.

Decades of years have elapsed since the hostilities of June 25. Looking back on the thorny path traversed by our people, I keenly realize afresh what a deep effect the hostilities of June 25 exercised on the development of our national history.

## Reflection on the Hostilities of June 25

### *What Is the Profound Meaning of the Disturbances of June 25?*

Let me say conclusion beforehand. First, our national question can never be settled by war; secondly, the nation can by no means find a way out without excluding foreign influences; thirdly, it is essential to striking out right path for the nation to achieve the nationwide unity based on lofty patriotism.

However, I was too deeply taken in by inspired propaganda

which had been afloat in the West for a long time to have a correct idea about the hostilities of June 25.

When the war broke out on June 25 the mass media of the United States and south Korea noisily spread the official report that the north Korean army invaded south Korea and it was taken at its face value in the West. It was common observations concerning the fate of the war in the West that the war would end soon with the participation of the US troops in it and that the north Korean army would be defeated without difficulty and north Korea be conquered.

I, too, believed the observations and did not doubt that the US army would win. From this point of view I considered the future of the nation and mine. This has led me to serious misjudgement.

First, I had a mistaken view on the outbreak of the war.

There was a long controversy as to who was the first to trigger off the war on June 25. The Western version was that the north first attacked and invaded the south. Of course, the communist camp including north Korea asserted that the south was the first to attack and invade the north and scathingly condemned it as the imperialist aggression of the United States.

The reason why I came to believe the version of north Korea's aggression on south Korea was that in three days, to be accurate, 63 hours, after the outbreak of the war the north Korean army seized Seoul, advanced southwards sweeping through the vast area of south Korea and reached the Rakdong River. I considered it as a proof that the north Korean army had long premeditated and been well prepared for the invasion of south Korea. But viewed from the objective standpoint free from the bias of inspired propaganda, this is a hardly tenable argument for north Korea's invasion of south Korea. Victory in the war depends on who makes an effective use of force and particularly on who has fortitude. The argument is untenable that victor is always the first to attack. Likewise, the fall of Seoul in three days after the outbreak of the war cannot serve as an argument for north Korea's invasion of the south.

As no one watched which side first triggered off the war on the 38th parallel on the 25th of June as an umpire accepted by both sides does in a football or volleyball game, it is difficult to make judgement only depending on both sides' assertions. This reminds

one of the words of Clausewitz, the founder of modern military science that “War is politics administered by other means.” The cause of the outbreak of war on June 25 in the last analysis should be sought in the policies pursued by the both sides around that time.

It is evident that north Korea would not oppose national reunification under the lead of the communist forces, if possible. But apart from its subjective intention, it is necessary to consider objective possibilities of its realization. As mentioned above, in the then situation north Korea was in no position to invade south Korea in an attempt to reunify the country by force of arms. In the light of balance of armed forces between the north and the south and the experiences of modern warfare, north Korea was in no position to force war on other side. The north Korean army was some 80,000 strong and was only two years old as a regular army, and was poorly equipped and backed with weak economic power. It would have been a reckless venture for it to force war upon 100,000-odd strong south Korean army which was more than four years old and had the backing of the powerful United States. Moreover, it was proved by the materials obtained by the different intelligence services of the United States that the Soviet Union and communist China which supposedly stood behind north Korea did not welcome the war on the Korean peninsula.

Besides, I am well aware that the north Korean side was always on the defensive in the armed conflicts which frequently took place along the 38th parallel in the period from liberation on August 15 up to June 25. In their political programme the north Korean authorities opposed the establishment of the separate government, advocated the north-south negotiations and complete independence and called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops and the peaceful reunification of the country.

In this light I think it unjustifiable to assert north Korea to be the provoker of the Korean war.

Now let me examine whether there are grounds for the version of south Korea's invasion on north Korea.

The outbreak of war on June 25 was not an accidental occurrence independent of the situation around that time. For those who served in the south Korean army before June 25 it was a

common knowledge that the south Korean army systematically waged the preliminary war as the preparation for the invasion of north Korea before June 25 under the supervision of the US military advisory group.

As the *Herald Tribune* reported in the issue for January 1st, 1950 that the then Defence Minister Sin Song Mo went so far to declare publicly that “Our army has completed the preparations to attack north Korea and is waiting the order from Washington.” Dulles, the then adviser to the US State Department, flew to Seoul on June 17, 1950, and abetted Syngman Rhee in war, saying, “Time has matured. It is necessary to open an attack against north Korea at once.” He went on to say:

“Start the aggression against the north accompanied by a counter-propaganda to the effect that the north invaded the south first. If you can hold out two weeks, everything will turn out smoothly, for during this period the United States, by charging north Korea with attacking south Korea, will induce the United Nations to action, in whose name land, naval and air forces will be mobilized.”

I heard this from Kim Hyo Sok, the then Home Minister.

In this connection I am reminded of the view of Stone, a noted American journalist and writer, who wrote in his book “Undisclosed History of the Korean War”:

“North Korea was supposed to be entirely responsible for the outbreak of war in Korea. However, in one year after that it turned out to be very uncertain. In the meantime many facts contradicting each other were revealed...and a number of more strange matters came to attract our attention. Hence I am more convinced of our following conclusion as to the truth of the start of the Korean war... I am convinced that the Korean war...was the outcome of the purposeful and premeditated aggression by those who were interested in the war in the Far East.”

This potentially suggests who provoked the Korean war.

Now let us consider how urgently the United States needed the start of war on June 25. In a word, the United States was vitally interested in it.

The overproduction crisis in the United States which started in



1948 became catastrophic in 1949 like in 1930. Commenting on this, the influential British journal *The Economist* wrote that a war was unavoidable since the United States sought to seize an opportunity to weather through the crises of financial panic. The artillery fire of June 25 blew away at once the economic crisis of the United States which was panting for acute business depression. General Van Fleet, the US 8th Army Commander in the Korean war, exclaimed:

“The Korean war was a blessing. It was a right war at a right place and right time.” This eloquently shows how eagerly the United States sought a war in Korea.

The following facts should not be left out in considering the then situation which impelled the United States to hurry on with the Korean war.

With the Soviet Union’s successful A-bomb test in September 1949 the United States lost a monopoly for A-bomb and in October 1949 the communist Chinese army entered Beijing and the founding of the People’s Republic of China was proclaimed. One can easily imagine that US top-level policymakers reached a decision that steps should be taken before things turn unfavourable for them to have a tight grip on the Korean peninsula.

As I was studying in the United States for a year before June 25, I had no opportunity to see directly how the war broke out. However, while studying for a long time the historical materials on the outbreak of war on June 25 and thinking about the strange fate of the nation in my own way, I came to consider the opening of hostilities on June 25 from a new angle, without being affected by the inspired propaganda. Mr. Li Song Ga, my old acquaintance, and my other colleagues stressed in their statement that the war of June 25 was a premeditated event. Mr. Li Song Ga, the then 8th Division Commander with its command in Kangnung, openly said, “At the time we were not allowed out to counter emergency and went into action at dawn of June 25.”

Lieutenant Han Su Han, a political officer in charge of the operation of the 17th Regiment made an impressive remark:

“The 24th of June was Saturday, and officers of the regiment were not allowed out. We were ordered to be on standby. All our

senses were on the strain, and we passed the night without sleep. Early in the morning of the 25th the headquarters issued us the secret order to open an attack against the area north of the 38th parallel.” Thus at the dawn of the 25th an offensive was taken on all front line along the 38th parallel, and in the areas of Haeju, Kumchon and Cholwon they advanced four to eight kilometres deep into the north across the 38th parallel.

I cannot but admit it natural that under such circumstances the north Korean side had to launch a counterattack.

As proved by stark facts, south Korea kept threatening to swallow up north Korea and frequently perpetrated armed provocations against it and thus the danger of all-out attack was imminent. Under the circumstance the north Korean army could not be indifferent to it and had to take countermeasure, which can be said to be an act of legitimate self-defence.

I think that the truth of the hostilities of June 25 has been more clarified with the US top-secret documents on the Korean war declassified after an interval of 30 years.

Time flowed and change has taken place in the thought of the south Korean people and, particularly the tragedy of Kwangju brought about volte-face in the south Korean people’s view on the United States. Now there is a conspicuous trend of public opinion which considers the truth of the June 25 hostilities from a new point of view free from the influence of the erstwhile inspired propaganda.

Next, I had a mistaken view that the war would end in the defeat of the north Korean army by the US army. From the beginning the United States was sure of its victory and the West did not doubt it. I was under such bias and did not suppose that the war would end otherwise.

That this was a grave mistake became clear as the United States actually admitted its defeat in the war amid the close attention of the whole world. General Clark, Commander-in-Chief of the UN forces, lamented: “The United States suffered defeat in this war for the first time in its history... I gained the unenviable distinction of being the first United States Army commander in history to sign an armistice without victory...”

In three years of the war the United States squandered three times as much war funds as in World War II. The allied forces of 15 countries and south Korean army, two million in all, and 1,090,000 American soldiers were mobilized but the United States could not win. They with huge armed forces and an immense amount of materials involving a population of hundreds of millions could not win victory against north Korea with a population of 12 million. This affords a striking proof that victory in the war does not depend on the numerical strength of the armed forces or on military and technical superiority. The north Korean army fought with the confidence in victory and with the lofty spirit that they beat back the foreign aggressor forces to creditably defend the country and the people. However, the UN forces had no cause to stake their lives in the war nor had faith either. They were already loser in the morale.

Particularly, the channels of command of the south Korean army, investigation, intelligence, logistics and the military police were all in the hands of pro-Japanese elements hailing from the Japanese and Manchukuo armies. It was difficult for them to command men and win the war. It is natural that such army was put to rout.

My misjudgement of the prospect of the war made me err in choosing the way to shape the future of the nation and my destiny.

My career was predestined by the thought that there is a bright future for the nation and me only when the north Korean army is defeated by the strong US army and north Korea is conquered.

The United States had to put its signature to the armistice agreement, unable to continue the war any more, but was reluctant to admit it. Gunfire ceased, but the top brasses of the United States were distressed like in mourning. On the day of truce, Taylor, the Commander of the 8th Army, ordered the units under his command to "close bars and refrain from taking all sorts of alcoholic drinks for the 48 hours from then on." He said: "Now is not the time to drink a toast. Gallant soldiers should know that there are still many things to do before being satisfied that their duty in Korea is over. Armistice does not mean the conclusion of war."

Now after an elapse of over 30 years there still persists the view that the US army has yet things to do on the Korean peninsula and the war is not yet over. Because of the obstinate attitude of the

United States national reunification is not achieved and strained situation is kept with the truce line in between in the Korean peninsula.

It is clear what is meant by the “things” the United States to do on the Korean peninsula. My expectation was too naive that the right to national self-determination of people would be exercised in dependence of the United States.

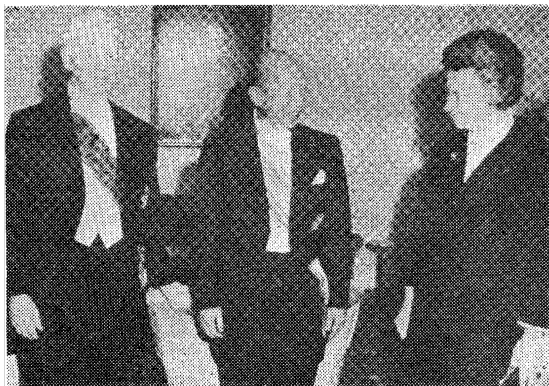
General Clark, Commander-in-Chief of the UN forces who affixed his signature to the armistice agreement, died on April 17, 1978. But there is still no guarantee for a lasting peace on the Korean peninsula and dictatorship is maintained in south Korea in a state of truce.

The tragedy of June 25 masterminded by the United States still continues to bring misfortune and disaster on our people.



# My Life as a Diplomat

OBJ



*Choe Dok Sin as ambassador to West Germany*

In April 1956 I left military service and entered government. To be more exact, I was asked to become south Korea's representative in South Viet Nam, and I was placed on the army reserve list.

At this time I became fully aware that one cannot spend one's life as one pleases.

The things I had seen and heard since landing at Pusan in 1946 in the liberated homeland had come as a surprise to me and I was disillusioned. After leading a melancholy life for a short time I entered the south Korean army with some aim in mind and spent ten years in it. But I could not realize my aspirations because from my first day in the army I was under pressure from the officers who had served in the Japanese and Manchukuo armies. At the same time I could hardly decline the earnest request of Doctor Rhee who placed the most implicit confidence in me. This is how I came to remove my military uniform and start the life of a diplomat in accordance with his request.

Needless to say, I had had some experience in diplomatic activities in the army. Having been present at the Panmunjom talks as the delegate from the south Korean army, I attended the special meeting of the Seventh Session of the U.N. General Assembly in August 1953, immediately after the ceasefire, and then the Eighth Session as a member of the delegation from south Korea. After that, I in military uniform visited Southeast Asian countries on several occasions as the head of goodwill missions.

Therefore, my being appointed minister in South Viet Nam in 1956 meant that now I, as a professional diplomat, was going into diplomacy in earnest.

Afterwards I was, in succession, ambassador to South Viet Nam, Minister of Foreign Affairs and ambassador to West Germany, before being appointed patriarch of Chondoism in 1967.

So I led a diplomatic life for 11 years. It can be said that I spent 14 years in the diplomatic field if the other years I was engaged in diplomacy are added.

During this time the internal and external situation of south Korea was very complicated. After June 25 war the United States, which was known as the closest ally of south Korea, faced serious political and economic crises, and conflicts between it and its

Western allies were aggravated, with the result that it became more isolated internationally. In this situation, in south Korea there were the April 19 uprising for democracy instead of dictatorship and then the May 16 military coup d'état which destroyed the influence of the uprising.

So, the United States' policy towards south Korea at one time seemed to be running into peril and the Syngman Rhee regime that had seemed to have become a "dynasty," collapsed overnight to be replaced by the Ho Jong transitional government, which was succeeded by the Chang Myon government, in its turn, was replaced by the Park Jung Hee military regime.

In these great political upheavals, it was by no means rare for those who had been top government officials until only yesterday to be thrown into jail and for the plutocrats of today to be bankrupt tomorrow; as a result people were seized with fear and uneasiness and their lives were a sea of trouble. Although I am not sure whether it was fortunate or unfortunate for me, in those days I was far away from the homeland and lived abroad continuously, except for the one year and five months I spent as the Foreign Minister. So I was able to serve four successive governments without suffering any misfortune. This may be rare in south Korean society. However, I travelled through Asia, America and Europe as a south Korean diplomat during this period, and there are many things I recall with deep emotion.

Needless to say there are more things I feel ashamed of than of which I am proud. But, in spite of the shame I feel I would like to recall them because they are things that cannot be ignored in connection with my life.

## In the Hope of Becoming a "Merited Subject" of a New "Dynasty"

### *The Formation of the Anti-Communist League of Asian Nations*

After the Eighth Session of the UN General Assembly in 1953, which I attended, I stayed in New York with Rim Byong Jik, south Korean ambassador to the UN, with the purpose of taking the



opportunity to add to my knowledge. One day I unexpectedly received a telegram from President Syngman Rhee instructing me to return immediately.

Wondering what could be the reason for this, I hastily returned to Seoul and went to Kyongmudae (the presidential residence). The old man acknowledged my greeting and said:

“I’m going to visit President Jiang soon. I called you so we could go together.”

This was so unexpected that I could not take it in at first. In fact, having been highly commended as a “warrior of Panmunjom” by Doctor Rhee and having even been advanced to the UN Assembly thanks to him, I nurtured a secret desire to be intimate with him so as to advance my career. So I was very happy at the thought that I would go to Taiwan with him. To be honest, I even felt “glorious.”

On top of that, President Jiang Jieshi had been the President of the Central Military Academy (successor to the Huang Pu Military Academy) in China when I graduated from it in 1936 and I had received the Diligent Study Medal from him. So, my emotions were even more intense. My emotions heightened and I was extremely excited when I entered the office of the President’s secretary. According to the secretary, General B had been recommended at first but Doctor Rhee had rejected him, so he had been replaced with General Y, but he, too, was not accepted. Then Syngman Rhee himself had nominated me.

After leaving the presidential residence, I pondered on how I should attend on him to repay his deep trust and to heighten my dignity.

After a great deal of thought I determined the following: “A President is the leader of a country, but there is no officer in attendance on him, though there is a police station attached to the presidential residence. So, I will act as his aide-de-camp.”

So I obtained golden braid and hung them on my military uniform as a stall officer would do and wore on my breast the Diligent Study Medal which had lain neglected at the bottom of my wardrobe since I received it from Jiang Jieshi. Then on November 27, 1953 I went to Kimpo airport to accompany Syngman Rhee.

Seen off by key figures representing the three powers of the

administration, the legislative and the judiciary and other high-ranking officials and generals, Syngman Rhee left the airport at 10 a.m. sharp on the personal plane of Clark, Commander of the US Army in the Far East. In order to ensure that absolute secrecy was preserved concerning his visit to Taiwan, he gave strict orders to the people concerned to report it only at least an hour after the plane had taken to the air. Probably he did this in view of the close proximity of communist China. The US air force escorted us directly to Taiwan.

In Taipei Doctor Rhee was warmly received by President Jiang. He stayed three days and nights and made public the south Korea-Taiwan joint statement, then on the fourth day we returned home. The following happened on the plane while we were returning home on November 30. I was informed that Syngman Rhee wanted me, so I went up to him. Abruptly he asked me:

“Did you read the joint statement?”

“Yes, I did.”

“Well, what do you think? Are the Americans consistent in their anti-communism?”

I was baffled, not knowing what he meant, and replied:

“Isn’t the United States more strongly opposed to communism than any other country?”

“No, we cannot depend on the Americans alone. So I want to do something myself.”

“What do you want to do, sir?”

“Well I want south Korea to rally together the anti-communist figures of southeast Asia. For this, as we announced in the joint statement, I am going to establish a collective anti-communist organization in southeast Asia. This means we must dispatch missions to the countries in this region. So, try and work out plan for this.”

On hearing his words, I realized that now Doctor Rhee, who was dead set against communism, was going to exert his influence not only at home but also abroad in order to play a leading role in the anti-communist movement. On the other hand, the doubt suddenly entered my mind that although this old man asserted “popular

rights” and other things in word, he was soaked in the idea of royalty, believing himself to be the descendant of Prince Yangnyong, and was going to build an international reputation for himself with the idea of remaining in office for life and, further, of founding a new “dynasty.”

However, Syngman Rhee’s true motives did not matter to me. It seemed that the road to success lay wide open before me.

After returning to Seoul I drew up the plan, spending four whole days and nights at it, with the thought that I would become a “merited subject” in establishing Doctor Rhee’s new “dynasty” by making a tour of Asian countries and playing a leading role in his formation of the Asian anti-communist organization.

I submitted the plan to Syngman Rhee. He was greatly satisfied and said, “Thank you. If we do well, we’ll be able to build up a huge force.” Next day he commissioned Doctor George Paek (Pack Rak Jun), President of Yonsei University, to act as head of the goodwill mission. So towards the end of the year, on December 10, the goodwill mission set out on a tour of Southeast Asia. The five-member party consisted of Li Bom Nyong who was said to have been on close terms with Syngman Rhee ever since they had sought refuge together in Hawaii, Hwang Gyu Myon, Presidential Secretary, myself and the Secretary of the Foreign Ministry.

After touring for about a month we returned home, where the head of the group drew up a report and submitted it to Doctor Rhee. I do not know exactly about what was in the report. But according to a rumour he did not write about the anti-communist policies of the countries he had visited, probably because he was a devout Christian and an erudite educationist; in fact he reported that because the rulers of those countries failed to administer the affairs of state properly and groundlessly labelled anyone who was discontented as a communist and enforced their dictatorship, faith could not be found in society and this, far from being supported by the people, stimulated communism.

Clearly such a report was not acceptable to the old man. Probably for this reason Syngman Rhee appeared to alienate Doctor Paek.

But, this did not mean that Syngman Rhee abandoned the

formation of the anti-communist league. In February and April, 1954, he again dispatched goodwill missions led by Li Bom Nyong and me to Southeast Asia, and persistently strove to form an anti-communist organization.

I first stopped at Taipei where Taiwanese government gave me a list of the names of the influential Chinese who were scattered all across Southeast Asia and then I visited Malaysia, South Viet Nam, Thailand and other countries. When I visited these countries I would go first to the US embassy on the pretext that south Korea had no diplomatic centre, and there I would meet the Chinese residents who had been made known to me by the Taiwanese government and see the leading figures of the country through their mediation.

As a result of my efforts, the Anti-Communist Conference of Asian Nations was held in Chinhae for three days from June 15, the same year, with the attendance of 31 delegates from five countries and three regions—south Korea, Taiwan, South Viet Nam, the Philippines, Thailand, the Kuril Island, Macao and Hong Kong.

Originally, Syngman Rhee had planned to hold a summit conference. But matters did not proceed as he wished. So he decided to hold a foreign ministers' conference, but this, too, was impossible. Eventually, his idea was realized after many difficulties, in the form of a private citizens' gathering.

But, because these countries felt that Syngman Rhee, who had put himself forward as host of the conference, was backed by the United States and could not act against the US, they pretended to agree with him even though, in fact, they were scarcely interested in it. So, they sent to it insignificant people of second or third rank. What was more, Thailand dispatched the owner of a small shipping company. In such conditions the conference seemed insignificant, compared with how it had been advertised.

However, on the first day of the conference Syngman Rhee stressed in his address of welcome that Asia would have a bright future, and, in particular, south Korea would attain a high rate of development, when they vigorously conducted the work of the anti-communist league. Furthermore, he was almost crazy with advocating anti-communism because on the very same day the Geneva Political Conference, which was held to discuss the matters

of Korea's reunification and a ceasefire in Indochina, broke up.

At that time, with the thought of becoming a "merited subject" in founding a new Rhee "dynasty" in obedience to him, I was greatly encouraged by his speech. After that I made a tour of the countries of southeast Asia at his request, and when the second conference was held in Manila on March 9, 1956, I attended it as a member of the south Korean delegation and stressed in glowing terms the importance of forming the Asian anti-communist organization.

When I was installed as the minister to South Viet Nam, I became separated from the work of the anti-communist league. Doctor Rhee made continuous efforts to strengthen the Asian anti-communist organization but constantly faced difficulties and in the long run, lost his leading position within the anti-communist league.

Although I came to think about it only many years later, the reason why Doctor Rhee, who had been so animated initially, forced himself in this sad plight can be explained in the following way. From the days when he was engaged in the so-called anti-Japanese independence movement abroad at the time of Japanese imperialist rule, he imprudently opposed communism, kowtowing to the United States. After August 15 liberation he came into power in south Korea under the aegis of the United States and ignited the Korean war to annihilate communism, only to be defeated. But even after that he was supported by the United States. So he became conceited and came out with ever greater self-flattery and antipathy to communism. As a result, he was detested by the international community. He accused Japan of being a pro-communist state on the ground that the Communist Party of Japan was being allowed to conduct political activities. Doctor Rhee was continually in conflict with Taiwan, which strongly demanded the admittance of Japan into league and this always hindered the unity of the member states. I think that motivated by this and other facts Nehru of India and Quirino of the Philippines, which were the main countries the anti-communist league manoeuvred to win over, alienated Syngman Rhee, regarding him as an extremely obstinate ultra-Rightist.

In view of all this, I cannot but smile a little smile at the wild fancy of Syngman Rhee in trying to form the Anti-Communist

League of Asian Nations with the backing of the United States and using it to increase his international reputation in order to set up a new “dynasty” and at the stupidity of myself who wanted to be a “merited subject” of Syngman Rhee’s “dynasty” in attendance on him, but who was flogging a dead horse.

At this time for me anti-communism served not merely as a badge or a rule of life but as a means to succeed in life. I sank down deeper into the mire of anti-communism.

### *The High-handedness of the Liberal Party's Government*

After the armistice Syngman Rhee seemed to have lost his reason, impelled by a desire to form a basis for a new “dynasty.” Externally, he wanted to form the Anti-Communist League of Asian Nations and lead it and, internally, rushed to establish a constitutional framework that would allow him to remain in office for life. Generally, it is the conventional practice that, since a constitution is the basic law of a country, it is amended after the approval of a majority in a national assembly.

Nevertheless, Syngman Rhee attempted to remain in office for life through revising the constitution, which he did by cooking up a special majority in the National Assembly with the mathematical method of “rounding to the nearest whole number.”

In 1952 Syngman Rhee placed Pusan under martial law and used suppression to make an amendment to the constitution, something which was unprecedented in the history of constitutionalism, so gratifying his lust for power. However, at that time he was unable to win control of the National Assembly because the Liberal Party that backed Syngman Rhee was composed mainly of lobbyists.

So, after the armistice, he determined to infiltrate, by hook or by crook, into the National Assembly members of the Liberal Party so that they would hold the majority there and bring it under his thumb. He made a scrupulous preparations for a general election to be held on May 20, 1954 which was the first election after the war.

The Liberal Party put forward as candidates only people who had vowed to pass a bill for amending the constitution so that Syngman Rhee could remain in office for life and mustered the maximum power and financial influence.

But the result of the election showed that the number of seats won by the Liberal Party fell below the quorum needed for amendment to the constitution.

The Liberal Party, therefore, began to work to win independents over to its side, with the aim of holding two-thirds of the seats. As a result, on June 10, the balance of power in the National Assembly stood as follows:

The Liberal Party held 131 seats, the Democratic National Party, 15 seats, the National Association, 2 seats, the National Party 2 seats, and independents 53 seats.

After drafting the constitutional amendment bill, the keynote of which was to withdraw the restrictions on the re-election of the first President, the Liberal Party received consent by signature from 136. MPs and formally submitted it to the National Assembly on September 6.

Syngman Rhee compelled the National Assembly to be blindly obedient to him and secretly put pressure on opposition assemblymen, saying, "Anyone who rejects the constitutional amendment bill will be regarded as someone without loyalty for safeguarding our country and people."

In this high-handed manner the constitutional amendment bill put forward by the Liberal Party was placed on the agenda of the National Assembly on November 1, 1954, over 70 days after first being submitted.

A heated debate between the government and opposition parties lasted for about a week. Needless to say, the controversy focussed on whether the removal of the restrictions on the re-election of the President would pave the way for Doctor Rhee to remain in office for life.

At that time I was at Kapyong, Kyonggi Province, then the location of the headquarters of the First Corps, and I supported Syngman Rhee. I believed that if Doctor Rhee administered domestic affairs properly and if the people asked for his guidance, it did not matter how many times he became President. Moreover, I believed that if the Liberal Party remained loyal to Doctor Rhee all would go well. And, as I read the newspapers every day, I wished this.

However, the secret ballot which was held in the afternoon of the 27th under the eyes of over 3,000 observers stood at 135 ayes, 60 noes, 1 void, 6 abstentions and 1 absentee. So, even vice-chairman Choe Sun Ju from the Liberal Party, who was acting chairman that day, had no alternative but to announce defeat, with a grave look on his face.

The constitutional amendment bill, which had been believed to pass without fail, was rejected by only one vote. If Syngman Rhee could not be elected for a third time, it was obvious that his regime would collapse. I, too, felt regret.

Next day, however, the Liberal Party made public, in the name of the floor leader, a statement reversing the previous day's announcement by the vice-chairman, which reads:

“Vice-chairman Choe announced that approval was not given at this session because of his own mistake caused by a report on the progress of proceedings which was based on an erroneous method of calculations. Two-thirds of the 203 assemblymen on the register amount to, to be exact, 135.33. But because the number of people cannot be calculated to the decimal point, the positive number most approximate to it is, without doubt, 135, according to the mathematical principle of rounding to the nearest whole number. So, the bill was approved.”

This was truly appalling. As was revealed later, after the constitutional amendment bill had rejected on the 27th, Chang Gyong Gun, who was notorious as a machinator in the Liberal Party, visited the Presidential residence with Choe Yun Sik, professor of mathematics at Seoul University and told Syngman Rhee that if the principle of rounding to the nearest whole number was applied, everything would be all right. At this Syngman Rhee was delighted. That night officials of the Liberal Party gathered at Li Gi Bung's for a discussion.

In such circumstances the resentment and antipathy of the people seethed like boiling water and it appeared that the political circles had been drawn into a vortex of chaos. Indignant assemblymen belonging to the Democratic National Party and independents formed a committee called the “Fellowship Society for the Protection of the Constitution” and launched a campaign to found a new party. Later, they formed the Democratic Party, and



dissension within the Liberal Party became so serious that some members resigned.

However, the top officials of the Liberal Party and the government who blindly followed Syngman Rhee were all the more delighted with their “victory,” and busied themselves idolizing him.

They had revered Syngman Rhee like a monarch. They put his portrait even on bank notes and silver coins and put his portrait and photograph up everywhere. Furthermore, when he toured the provinces they let the local officials fetch people even from as far away as 20 or 24 km to welcome him.

And that was not all. The Liberal Party government erected towers for the long life of Syngman Rhee in different places and built Unam Park, Unam Bridge, Unam Street, Unam Pavilion and the like, all named after him, and put up a statue of him in the Pagoda Park in Seoul. There was even a suggestion to rename the city of Seoul the city of Unam.

Although under his patronage, I hoped the carriage of the constitutional amendment bill aimed at electing him for a third term, I felt disgust and disappointment—something odd that I had never sensed before—when I saw him so attached to power that he wielded unprecedented wilfulness and acted like a despot.

### *Appointed Minister to South Viet Nam*

One day early in April, 1956, I was summoned by Syngman Rhee and went to the presidential residence.

On seeing me he said, “O! General Choe.” Doctor Rhee used to speak in English when he felt cheerful. He seemed to be cheerful that day, so he spoke in English and went on:

“I want you to go to live in Southeast Asia. I have thought the matter over and have discovered that we have no reliable footing there.”

He pointed out that a conference of the anti-communist league had been held in Manila and that south Korea having insufficient influence in southeast Asia, it was imperative to work for the league continuously to intensify solidarity and consolidate the anti-communist forces.

“It is a fact that south Korea has as yet secured no strong foothold in Southeast Asia.”

“Well, where do you think is the best place to establish it?”

“It seems to me that Bangkok in Thailand would be good, but that is somewhat difficult under the present circumstances. So, I think Saigon is preferable, Your Excellency.”

“Saigon! Good. Then, I’ll try to set up a consulate there.”

“An embassy or a legation would be better than a consulate, I think.”

“Well, then, let’s set up a legation there to begin with.”

This was something of a shock because I was sorry to have to retire from military service after serving as a corps commander for only a year.

“Sir! There are many years before I must retire and I want to remain in military uniform a little longer.”

“Don’t worry. If you want to spend more time in the army you can do so after you return home from South Viet Nam, can’t you? You’re familiar with South Viet Nam, so it’s desirable that you go there.”

The old man said this probably because I had visited South Viet Nam more than once in connection with the work of the anti-communist league.

For me, who had enjoyed the great confidence of Doctor Rhee since my participation in the armistice talks it was unthinkable to refuse his request, even though I was still disappointed about the way in which the constitutional amendment had been made by rounding to the nearest whole number. So, I determined to go to Saigon as he told me. My long military life came to an end and I started for my new post as the first south Korean minister in South Viet Nam at the end of April 1956, accompanied by military attache Lieutenant Colonel Li Taek Gun.

In Saigon I bought a private house from someone who had moved to France for use as the south Korean legation.

After that serving as south Korean minister I had many interesting experiences. In particular, I cannot forget what occurred when President Ngo Dinh Diem visited south Korea in 1957.

Through the good offices of Archbishop Lo Gi Nam, Roman Catholic President Ngo met Vice-President Chang Myon at mass. I, as south Korean minister in South Viet Nam, was also present.

Afterwards, however, a rumour spread in political circles that Ngo Dinh Diem offered political funds to Vice-President Chang Myon.

The rumour was traced to the Security Chief at the presidential residence, Kwak Yong Ju.

In those days Doctor Rhee backed up his statement unreservedly. Even ministers and officials of the Liberal Party who managed party affairs were cowed in the presence of Kwak Yong Ju like a mouse before a cat. So, people called him the Deputy Vice-President.

Chang Myon found himself in a fix.

Then I revealed the truth, saying: "It is not true. I was one of the group. President Ngo respects Doctor Rhee and is not someone who would do such a thing."

At the beginning of 1959 Doctor Rhee visited South Viet Nam. With this as an impetus, the legation was raised to the status of an embassy and I became ambassador to South Viet Nam. Moreover, I became closely acquainted with President Ngo as a result of the riot which broke out in Saigon on October 11 that year.

At about 3 o'clock in the morning some soldiers rose in revolt against the Ngo Dinh Diem regime. Because the south Korean embassy was near the presidential residence in Saigon, I was able to see what happened.

Due to a false rumour that the insurgent troops had occupied the broadcasting station and the central telegraph and telephone exchange and that the government army had been defeated, even the American ambassador and foreign correspondents in Saigon reported that the Ngo Dinh Diem regime had been overthrown.

However, during the day I saw with my own eyes what was taking place around the South Vietnamese presidential residence, and I radioed the news to Seoul several times. The riot was put down in 33 hours.

The home and foreign reporters in Seoul gave out the news on the basis of my dispatches and it spread over the world. As a result

the dignity of President Ngo was not misrepresented. From that time onwards Ngo Dinh Diem entertained exceptionally good feelings towards me.

## Adapting Myself to the Political Upheavals

*April 19 and a Banquet Arranged by McNagie*

I witnessed the riot against President Ngo in Saigon in October 1959 and though it was put down, I felt that I could not regard it as the concern of others alone. Despite being hurt by the usual high-handedness with which Doctor Rhee did things, such as revising the constitution by employing the method of rounding to the nearest whole number, I had gone to Saigon at his request. Yet I always felt fearsome and uneasy, thinking: "Will Doctor Rhee remain in power for long?" When he falls, I will not be safe.

This was because all the south Korean people knew that I was under his patronage and that I had gone to Saigon thanks to his confidence.

In addition, traditionally in south Korea spring is the political season and it was expected that the election of the fourth President and fifth Vice-President would be held in the spring of 1960. I watched the political situation in south Korea more closely than ever.

On February 3 the government announced publicly that the election would be held on March 15. I felt under even greater strain. The Liberal Party and government authorities were oblivious to public opinion and were thinking up cold-blooded schemes for the elections, wanting only to present an overwhelming victory to President Syngman Rhee and Vice-President Li Gi Bung.

Through the mass media I heard in Saigon that because Cho Byong Ok, the presidential candidate of the Democratic Party who had been in the Walter Lead Army Hospital in the United States to receive medical treatment had died suddenly of paralysis of the heart on the night of February 15, the Democratic Party had asked to be allowed to register an alternative presidential candidate, but the government had refused.

In order to have Li Gi Bung who was being challenged by Chang Myon of the Democratic Party elected Vice-President, the Liberal Party and the government, on hearing that the latter would take the stump in Taegu on February 28, gave instructions that public officials be at their offices and all pupils attended school as usual, even though it was Sunday. This was aimed at stopping people gathering at the meeting place.

In addition, Minister of Home Affairs Choe In Gyu ordered the governors and heads of police stations of the counties in south Korea to enforce the so-called four principles of unfair election, which were that 40 per cent of ballots be cast before polling day, open ballot by triad or ennead, polling stations be maintained by "armband units," and election observers from the Democratic Party be corrupted or expelled from the polling stations.

I shuddered. Even though they were fighting an election campaign, they were going too far, I thought. It seemed to me that some mishap would surely occur in south Korea.

Just as expected Saigon broadcasted on March 16 that on the previous day the election had taken place in south Korea, but that the Democratic Party had immediately declared it invalid and that at 7 p.m. hundreds of young people and students in the port city of Masan had staged a demonstration denouncing the unfair election and that as a result of the police's opening fire, there had been 80 odd casualties.

Although that was not unexpected, when I heard the news, my heart beat faster. It was an event bitterly to be lamented, unprecedented in the history of south Korea, that although south Korea was under the free democratic system and as a rule, the day of the election was an auspicious day for the nation tragedies in which people were even shot to death had taken place.

Next day it was reported that Syngman Rhee had received 89 per cent of the votes and that Li Gi Bung, too, had been elected by an overwhelming majority.

I was astonished to hear that the previous day's bloodshed in Masan had been caused by "communist secret agents." I could not believe it.

In April, I heard news which gave an even greater shock.

Apparently Kim Ju Ryol had gone missing on the previous day in the midst of a demonstration in Masan, and when his dead body was found at a quay by an angler, with his eyes run into by splinters of a tear-gas shell, the citizens of Masan rose up again.

“An emergency at last,” I thought.

Towards noon on April 19 Colonel Chong, military attache at the embassy, hastily came to me in the ambassador’s office and said:

“Ambassador, the situation in Seoul is critical. Martial law has been proclaimed across the country after students began large-scale demonstrations in Seoul, Pusan and Kwangju, claiming that the March 15 election was invalid.”

A vision of the riot in Saigon that I had witnessed rose in my mind.

From then on I paid closer attention to foreign news broadcasts.

I heard US Secretary of State Christian Huter said in an official statement that the US government regarded the demonstrations in south Korea as an expression of the people’s discontent with the recent election and with the oppressive measures taken, and that it did not regard south Korea as a free, democratic country.

This was an open denunciation of Syngman Rhee’s misrule.

I was even surprised when I was told that, in the morning of April 20, McNagie, American ambassador to south Korea, had met Syngman Rhee and said to him, “If the President does not take radical steps the situation will grow more serious.” This, too, was a kind of naked intimidation by the United States.

I could only worry about the fate of the Syngman Rhee regime. I watched the situation in the homeland more carefully.

Syngman Rhee had all the members of the Cabinet submit their resignation, discussed how the situation could be saved with Ho Jong and Pyon Yong Tae, let Li Gi Bung issue a statement to the effect that he refused to be appointed Vice-President and finally himself declared that he resigned as president of the Liberal Party.

I thought that the old man had done this with the intention of shifting the blame for the state of affairs on to others and of maintaining his own power.

In the afternoon of April 25, even university professors joined

the street demonstrations. On April 26, 500,000 citizens of Seoul turned out in the streets and the whole capital city was in chaos. The bronze statue of Syngman Rhee which had stood in the Pagoda Park was dragged from street to street, a rope bound about its neck.

Later, I was told that troops from one platoon were sent to the crossroads of Kwanghwamun Street to block it and stood shoulder to shoulder to present an impenetrable wall in order to prevent the demonstrators from advancing toward the presidential residence. A middle-aged gentleman of about forty or so left the crowd and approached the soldiers, shouting, "Shoot us to death. Shoot all your fellow countrymen to death."

A soldier who seemed to be the platoon leader said, in a strong Kyongsang Provinces accent: "What's the story. Uncle? ...It's a shame. We soldiers share the same blood as you. If we're ordered to shoot you, we'll turn on our heels and fire at the ground. Keep quiet, please."

The moment he said this the demonstrators shouted, "Long live the south Korean army," "Long live the south Korean army."

The guns of the soldiers came to be thought of as ones "not to shoot with." The demonstrators and soldiers were like comrades-in-arms, sharing a common purpose. The demonstrators closed in upon the presidential residence.

In this situation Syngman Rhee announced: "If the people want, I'll resign as President."

The tyrannical regime of Syngman Rhee, who had once seemed to be establishing a new "dynasty," had at last been brought down by the resistance of the people who had risen up like raging waves to demand popular rights.

In fact, although I felt uneasy as I witnessed Syngman Rhee resorting to tyranny more and more openly after the May 20, 1954 election, I hoped in my heart that he would remain in office for life.

I believed that only when he was strong, could my prospects be bright. So, on seeing his downfall, I felt as if the sky had fallen in.

However, on the other hand, this made me look square at the people. I could only repeat an old saying which goes, "Those who are very weak but unconquerable are the people and those who are quite stupid but undeceivable are also the people."

Here I should like to add that the American ambassador to south Korea, Mcnagie was more pleased about President Syngman Rhee's resignation than anyone else.

This was a matter concerning America's view of Syngman Rhee. In concluding my story about the April 19 incident, I should like to add a few words because I think it would be relevant to clarify at this point what I heard and felt about it.

As can easily be guessed from the above-mentioned facts, though Syngman Rhee had issued the statement that he would resign, he made desperate efforts to remain in power and was forced to resign. It would be more accurate to say that he was ousted rather than he resigned.

I was told that ambassador Mcnagie was so delighted with this that he gave a banquet at the US embassy in the evening of the day when Syngman Rhee published the statement saying he would resign.

On first reflection, this may appear to have been too much. It was hard to understand how he who had until only a short time before been extolling Syngman Rhee as a "great patriot" and the "father of the country" could be pleased at his resignation, even arranging a banquet, far from expressing his regrets.

However, what lay behind this was the two-pronged policy of the United States towards south Korea.

As part of its Asian strategy, after the ceasefire the United States made Syngman Rhee form the Anti-Communist League of Asian Nations externally, and internally helped him assume the third-term Presidency with the aim of radically increasing his authority.

However, subsequently Syngman Rhee began to indulge in the illusion of being the "father of the country" and his self-complacence and selfishness grew more intense everyday.

In particular, he was obstinate in his attitude towards Japan. He took the position that he could not normalize diplomatic relations with Japan unless it made an official apology for the evil deeds it had performed over many years, adopted a modest attitude towards south Korea, abandoned the vice of aggression and pledged itself to counter the growth of the communist forces.

This brought the Asian strategy of the United States to a



deadlock.

On top of all that, at this time Syngman Rhee was over eighty. As is usual with people who reach eighty, Syngman Rhee grew so senile that he had little creative initiative in political affairs. He was simply obsessed by pride and self-conceit.

At Cabinet meetings he would admonish ministers in bad language. If a minister made a mistake, he would insult him, saying, "You are like a clod of blood." In addition, not even recognizing a minister who was making a speech at a Cabinet meeting, he once asked: "Who are you?"

To relate how he gave instructions on matters of policy, he did it in such a way as to say to the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry "Mind that the price of rice does not rise," and to the Minister of Home Affairs, "Be careful to see there are no communists." For all this, he believed that state affairs were being administered well, according to his instructions, and stuck to the dictatorship.

In these circumstances the United States realized that the longer he remained in power, the more he would be isolated from the people and the more serious thing would get, and that this would, in turn, hamper the execution of its policy towards south Korea.

Therefore, in the summer of 1959 Eisenhower sent to south Korea Walter Jerd, a member of the House of Representatives from the Republican Party, who already knew Syngman Rhee to advise him to choose a young successor who enjoyed the confidence of the young and middle-aged people of south Korea, and resign from the Presidency and hand over power to him.

Nevertheless, this old man's lust for political power was insatiable and he laughed off Jerd's advice, that is, Eisenhower's suggestion. To trace Eisenhower's view on Syngman Rhee, as early as the time of the June 25 war he had drawn up a plan to remove him through the "ever ready" operations, but decided that he would wait a little longer and see, and assisted him setting up a "dynasty." However, about the year 1958 he reached the conclusion that the old man would have to go.

When the April 19 Uprising broke out the United States described it as an expression of the justifiable grievances of the south Korean people. It asked Syngman Rhee to carry out radical

reforms and at the same time issued a statement which despite being that of a foreign embassy, sounded so peremptory as to be regarded as a formal one.

In addition, as became known later, when Syngman Rhee, on hearing the cry of the demonstrators, “Resign, Rhee regime,” said at 10:30 a.m. on April 26, that he would announce his resignation within 48 hours, Mcnagie put pressure to him, saying that it would be better to make it public then and there to stop the bloody affair from becoming more serious.

In this way Syngman Rhee’s resignation, for which the United States had been striving for several years, was won and the United States avoided a crisis in its policy towards south Korea, and pleased with this, Mcnagie arranged a banquet and played the piano. yelling in delight.

During the April 19 Uprising I realized what people meant when they said that because the President of south Korea was America’s stooge who executed its policy on the spot in line with its Asian strategy, it could replace him at any time it pleased.

And I think that this is not confined to the past, but is still true today.

### *Return to Your Previous Post*

In so-called free, democratic countries it is the usual practice that when a new government takes office the ambassadors resident abroad, who were appointed by the old government, asked the new government whether it wishes to retain them. In other words, they are bound to hand in their resignation, if only for form’s sake.

However, when the Ho Jong transitional government emerged in south Korea after the April 19 incident, most of the ambassadors who had been appointed by the Syngman Rhee government fled to United States without submitting their resignation because they not only had had close personal relations with him but also were connected with the United States in one way or another.

As for myself, I was on very intimate terms with Doctor Rhee, but I had no backing to speak of in the United States like others did. Even if I had wanted to flee like them, I had nowhere to go. I could

only return to my homeland.

I asked to be accepted, motivated by the thought “although the regime has changed, the ‘Republic of Korea’ remains intact and I, as a professional diplomat of the ‘Republic of Korea,’ a sovereign state, will fulfil my fundamental obligations.”

Taking into account the fact that Ho Jong, though the Foreign Minister, was serving concurrently as the head of the transitional government, I unofficially asked Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Li Su Yong to advise me about what I should do.

He replied to me: “If you return home, you may have to pay for the past that you enjoyed the confidence of President Syngman Rhee and were implicated in the Kochang affairs. So, you should stay where you are and not come here.”

I took this as good advice and believed myself to be fortunate.

After that, with the establishment of the government of the Democratic Party, I formally tendered my resignation from the post of ambassador. I was informed in Saigon towards the end of September that my resignation had been accepted. So I visited President Ngo to pay my respects prior to my return home. He gave a farewell party and said:

“You’ll have trouble when you return home, won’t you?”

“I don’t know, but I think I must return anyway.”

“We are going to set up a Korean language course at Saigon university. Why don’t you take charge of it, instead of returning home?” I was grateful. But I had got it into my head, one may perhaps call it the military spirit, that one has to face up to situation.

“Thank you, but I should return home once at least and make a report on affairs here. If circumstances permit, I’ll return here later.”

In this way, I said good-bye to President Ngo and on October 17 I left Saigon for Seoul, seen off by Vice-President, the Foreign Minister, an acting Defence Minister and others.

I flew via Hong Kong and then on to Taipei where the south Vietnamese ambassador to Taiwan telephoned me to tell me that he would visit me at my hotel to deliver a telegram to me from

President Ngo. A short time later he brought it and it read: "Your government wishes you to remain as the ambassador to our country, so return to Saigon."

I could not understand what was going on. Although I did not act on the telegram, as I needed the direct instructions from my own government and was already near Seoul, I telegraphed the Foreign Ministry in Seoul to ascertain whether it was true to this effect: "I have received a telegram from President Ngo. I have been informed that I shall remain in office and I want your confirmation. If I receive no reply, I will arrive in Seoul on the scheduled day."

After that, as no definite reply to my telegram was forthcoming, I went to Seoul on the appointed day. At Kimp'o airport I saw no officials from the Foreign Ministry. Only Lieutenant Colonel Li Taek Gun who had been in South Viet Nam with me and had been transferred to the post of ceremonial officer at the Ministry of Defence and Lieutenant General Kang Yong Hun were there to meet me.

Next day I visited Prime Minister Chang Myon. He warmly grasped my hand and told me that President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Viet Nam had cordially asked the second republic to have me remain in office as ambassador to Viet Nam. Then he said, "Please return to your post."

It seemed to me that Ngo Dinh Diem had opened up a bright future for me. A few days later I met Foreign Minister Chong Il Hyong who had returned home after the 15th Session of the UN General Assembly. I greeted him and told him how I had come to be reappointed to my post. But his first words to me were: "It is no business of the Prime Minister," and he was reluctant to approve my leaving the country again.

I was keenly aware of the animosity he felt towards me.

At the time of the May 1950 election to the National Assembly Chong Il Hyong and my father ran for election in the same constituency. The former won 9,000 votes and became a member of the National Assembly because my father, even though he had won 30,000 votes, did not take his seat because of pressure from the authorities.

However, apparently unable to disregard the intention of Prime

Minister Chang Myon, he agreed several days later, so I returned to Saigon towards the end of October that year, returning to office as south Korean ambassador to South Viet Nam.

On reflection, my assumption of the office of ambassador in Saigon could be ascribed to the private confidence of Syngman Rhee. For my part, I racked my brain to repay him for his confidence.

Viewed in this light, though I am not returning to the feudal relations between a sovereign and his subject, I should have retired from office together with Syngman Rhee.

Nevertheless, I continued to serve both the Ho Jong and Chang Myon governments, professing myself to be a “professional diplomat of south Korea, a sovereign state.”

On looking back on the past, it was ridiculous that I thought south Korea to be a sovereign state and, further, professing myself to be a “professional diplomat” was nothing but justification of my short-sighted view on a splendid official post.

### *I Supported the Military Regime*

I returned to Saigon and made regular weekly reports as before. If there was a change, it was no more than the fact that whereas formerly I had sent reports in English to President Syngman Rhee, I now sent them in Korean to the Foreign Minister.

I think it advisable to explain in passing why I had come to make reports in Korean instead of in English.

Originally, after I took office as minister in South Viet Nam in April 1956, I regularly sent reports to Syngman Rhee. Needless to say, they were typewritten in Korean.

However, even after the third or fourth time there was no response from Seoul at all. This seemed quite strange to me. So, I made inquiries, only to be told that Franciska, Syngman Rhee’s wife, would look into all the papers submitted to him like a presidential secretary and not hand to him any which were not written in English. She did not understand Korean.

After learning of this I wrote my reports in English. These were responded to immediately. From that time I reported in English

without a second thought. When I think of it now, this was certainly wrong and numerous complaints were made. There was a strong objection to MacArthur's proclamation that English should be the official language of south Korea in the days of US military rule. But even after the founding of the "ROK" reports submitted to the government were not accepted if they were not written in English. This fact alone was enough to show that the country had been alarmingly corrupted.

However, although I was minister to a foreign country, this obvious fact did not occur to me and, to be honest, I drew up my reports in English with great care in order to win the favour of Franciska and gain promotion.

But, with the establishment of the government of the Democratic Party, I sent reports in Korean to the Foreign Minister, according to established formalities.

However, I received no reply from him. I thought this was because he wanted to have as little contact as possible with me.

At the end of October, when I went to Seoul, I heard the news that there had been conflict between the old and new factions of the Democratic Party when the new government was formed, and I was afflicted more than once with the thought: "Even the Syngman Rhee government which tried to set up a dynasty fell, so will the Chang Myon government last long? I must be prudent."

So I was unable to attend diligently to my duties and I spent every day in varying moods, according to the state of affairs, until in the afternoon of May 16, 1961 South Vietnamese radio broadcast a news flash.

It said that there had been a military coup d'état in south Korea and that at 9 a.m. martial law had been proclaimed in the name of Lieutenant General Chang Do Yong, President of the Military Revolutionary Commission. I sent a telegram to the Foreign Ministry to learn details of the matter. But there was no response. Fortunately Lieutenant General Ham Byong Son was staying in South Viet Nam to conduct a military inspection. When I commanded the Second Regiment, he had been a staff officer in charge of supply in the same regiment. I told someone to go and fetch him.

“Lieutenant General Ham, please tell me about the situation in Seoul.”

“You want to know about the military revolution, do you?”

“How is it, now that the Military Revolutionary Commission has assumed the title of the Supreme Assembly for National Reconstruction, that Army Chief of Staff Chang Do Yong holds the office of its chairman?” This is what I asked him at first, as I doubted whether the name of the Army Chief of Staff could be introduced as the “chairman” of a “revolutionary” organization.

“It seems that Army Chief of Staff Chang is a puppet. The behind-the-scenes leader, so reports have it, is Major General Park Jung Hee.”

“Doesn’t the involvement of the Army Chief of Staff mean that the whole of the army was mobilized?”

“The eight-term cadets are the prime movers.”

The eight-term cadets had been at the Military Academy when I was its president.

I should say this made my heart warm to the “revolutionary soldiers.”

“Is that so? Then I’m sure they won’t withdraw.”

“Withdraw? ...Nothing of the sort. Apparently they regard anti-communism as the national policy..., and when they have fulfilled the task of sweeping away corruption and social ills...and putting an end to the hardships of the people, they will hand over political power to other politicians and attend to their main duties.”

It seemed to me that Lieutenant General Ham already had some inside knowledge of the “military revolution.”

“Hum... But how do they intend to conduct this revolution in south Korea, given that the United States seems to oppose it?”

“They started with a sincere love of their country and people. They advocate national democracy.”

“Advocate national democracy!”

Fundamentally speaking, I was opposed to a military coup d’état, but I was touched by his words.

Firstly this was because I had an abhorrence of the corrupt old

politicians, and the young men of the army had turned out to oust them and conduct the affairs of state in an unconventional manner.

Although instance after instance might be cited to show how things had stood with the corrupt administration of the old politicians, I think it is enough to say that their unsettled restaurant bills exceeded one hundred million *won*.

While people wandered about the streets to sustain their meager lives, dressed in rags, they, by virtue of their being the “nation’s elite” or the “high officials of democratic government,” administered the affairs of state in restaurants and among women’s skirts and enjoyed sumptuous banquet, always finding themselves in fashionable restaurants on a variety of pretexts, intending to settle their bills with taxes that would be collected from the people. I harboured ill feelings towards such evil practices which presaged national ruin.

Secondly I was moved because these young men of the army were advocating national democracy.

Of course, they had no clear conception of this term. However, they seemed to be aspiring to something national and democratic, having realized that a Western-style democracy did not suit the situation in south Korea. I thought this had something in common with the tenet of Chondoism which held that Westerners and Japanese be driven out and annihilated and tyranny eliminated to save the people. This made a favourable impression on me.

Yet another reason for my being touched was that the prime movers of the coup d’état were the eight-term cadets of the Military Academy and, in particular, Chang Do Yong and Park Jung Hee who were regarded as its leaders had been my subordinates and disciples in the past.

Perhaps this was the principal and immediate cause for my supporting the military regime. Chang Do Yong had been the Commander of the Fifth Regiment when I was the Commander of the 3rd Brigade and Park Jung Hee had served as a company commander of a cadet corps with the rank of captain at the Military Academy when I was its president.

Quite a few people today call Park Jung Hee a pro-Japanese element and traitor to the nation. But at the time of the May 16



coup I knew nothing about him except the fact that he had served in the Manchukuo army and had joined the Workers' Party of South Korea, only to inform secretly against his comrades at the time of the Ryosu-Sunchon incident. In addition, he, though he had served in the Manchukuo Army, had been a man of low standing among the pro-Japanese elements and even though he had betrayed someone, he had been almost consigned to oblivion. Rather, he was appreciated as a clever and comparatively pure-hearted man among military men, but after the purge in the army he found things difficult. In these circumstances some young officers, I guessed, who shared his plight and hatred for the corrupt old politicians and high-ranking generals, plotted a mutiny with the backing of Park Jung Hee.

So I thought that if even a man with such a career was to be labelled a Japanophile and ostracized, one would scarcely be able to maintain life and that in south Korean society, where the pro-Japanese had gained influence, one could only join hands with them, so long as one was not a man of principles. I felt an urge to encourage them.

So, towards the end of May, I, as a senior officer in the army, sent a private letter to Chang Do Yong, Chairman of the Supreme Assembly for National Reconstruction, to this effect:

"It is usual for a fierce tiger in the mountains to become powerless if it goes out into the streets. It is very good that the men of the army say they will come out and clean up the dirty streets of Seoul and then return to the army. For this it is necessary to enact legal provisions for transferring power to civilians and I think it reasonable that all sectors of the population be represented, with President Yun Bo Son as the central figure."

If this was done the demands of the men of the army would not be ignored. But if they made a mess of it, this would present a serious social problem.

I did not wait for a reply, and of course there was none. So, I became increasingly anxious to learn of the political situation in the homeland. The main thing I wanted to know was the attitude of the United States towards the military coup.

So, one day I scanned the back issues of the *New York Times*

commencing with the issue on May 16 and found in the issue for May 19 an article that read: "Assistant Secretary Bolts said that he thought America would recognize the new military leaders of south Korea. Even before the resignation of Prime Minister Chang the American embassy in Seoul unofficially handled affairs with the revolutionary commission and will undoubtedly continue to do so in the future."

I guessed the United States had pulled the strings for the military coup.

Towards the end of June I was ordered by the military regime to tour the Philippines and other countries in Southeast Asia, as the head of a goodwill mission.

### *Head of a Goodwill Mission and an Omen*

Frankly speaking, I was glad to be given this order by the military regime. This was because although, after the coup d'état, many people had been affected by the law to clean up political activities or the law to dispose of illicit money makers, I had been ordered to act as the head of a goodwill mission, and I regarded this as evidence of my being trusted.

To be honest, at the time world opinion was against the military regime. So, it decided to dispatch goodwill missions to five regions—America, Europe, Africa, the Middle and the Near East and Southeast Asia—in order to make friendly nations and neutral countries realize the irreversibility of the military coup in south Korea.

I believed it was a sound measure to put me in charge of the Southeast Asian region because not only had I made my position clear as a supporter of the military regime, but also I had frequented this area during the period of the Syngman Rhee regime and because Saigon, the place of my appointment, was at the centre of the Southeast Asian region in those days and I was a senior officer in the army and my position in society was ambassador.

On any account, I was determined to do something in return for the trust of the military regime, and I was making hasty preparation for my departure as the head of the goodwill mission, when I received additional instructions from Seoul to visit Taiwan and

Japan, which had not been mentioned originally.

I took it into my head to go to Seoul to meet the authorities of the military regime now that I had to visit Japan. So, at the end of June I went straight to Seoul. Immediately after my arrival Chang Do Yong was confined to his house, and Park Jung Hee was set to take up the post of Chairman of the Supreme Assembly for National Reconstruction on July 3. Accordingly, I had to replace my credentials as the head of the mission which had been signed by Chang Do Yong with ones signed by Park Jung Hee. And, in accordance with my plan, I called on Park Jung Hee at the office of the Chairman of the Supreme Assembly. He greeted me kindly, calling me “sir,” and explained the significance of the “military revolution” and said, “I ask your cooperation in tiding over the national crisis.” Then I went to the office of the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency to meet Kim Jong Pil who was swollen with the pride of the victor. When I greeted him he also said a few words about why they had carried out the coup d’état and asked me to assist in building friendly relations with the countries of Southeast Asia.

In this way, satisfied with the fact that they treated me as their senior, I started on my tour of Southeast Asia in early July, accompanied by Cho Nam Chol, Kim Jun Yop and a secretary from the Foreign Ministry, all of who had been nominated by the military regime.

Our party visited 15 countries—Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, South Viet Nam, Thailand, Cambodia, Burma, Ceylon, Laos, Pakistan, India, Nepal and another.

In the course of this I met many noted politicians and diplomats, among whom the image of Indian Prime Minister Nehru is most clearly printed on my mind.

Along with my group I first entered a small room, guided by the chief secretary of the Indian Foreign Ministry. It was only as large as the waiting room in a big hospital in Seoul, and in it there were rudely-made wooden benches.

I guessed that they would take us to Nehru’s office after allowing us to take a short rest there. Nevertheless, I was slightly uneasy at the thought of how they had taken guests from a far-off country to

such a humble room.

Five minutes later Prime Minister Nehru opened the inside door of his office and entered with a smile on his face and asked us to follow him. The room where we had rested was a waiting room for guests and Prime Minister Nehru had no private drawing room.

His office was so humble that it reminded us of the office of the headmaster of a primary school in south Korea. In the room there was only a large table and no decorations on the walls. The chairs he asked us to sit on and his own were all hard, wooden ones. There was no electric fan although it was boiling hot. He wore clothes that were half Western in style made of white cotton produced in India.

I was moved by the humble way of life of Prime Minister Nehru. I told him in detail of the historical background of the coup d'état which had taken place in south Korea and of its irreversibility and then asked that diplomatic relations be established between south Korea and India.

At this he answered: "With regard to the matter of establishing diplomatic relations with countries whose territories are divided, there is much to be considered. If relations are established at ambassadorial level immediately, it may promote the perpetual division of Korea and impede its reunification. At present north Korea has a trade mission here and I want to raise it to the status of a consulate before long. I would like to advise south Korea also to set up a trade mission, and then to establish a consulate at the same time as north Korea does."

Prime Minister and concurrently Foreign Minister of Australia Menzies is also a person I cannot forget.

When he turned down our request for an interview, we asked earnestly to be received only for 20 minutes and finally managed to meet him.

He was off-hand with me right from the start, and immediately asked:

"On what business have you come to see me?"

I answered: "Well, we have carried out a military coup and have come to discover the views of a great politician such as yourself concerning the matter in order to improve the political situation."

As soon as the words “a great politician such as yourself” came out of my mouth, his frown suddenly relaxed and his tone of voice softened considerably.

“So far we have stood by you at the UN General Assembly. But in the future we will be unable to do so.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Your army overthrew the constitutional government, didn’t it?”

“There was a good reason for doing so,” I said and explained the situation in south Korea.

“There seems to be a degree of sense in what you say. As you say you want to know my views, I will tell you. You must declare before the world that you will transfer power to civilians at some time.”

He, who believed in parliamentary democracy, took the view that even if the men of the army in south Korea had acted to prevent a crisis in the national administration that threatened to result in the country becoming communist, he was unable to compromise with anyone who broke the rule that power should change hands by peaceful methods in which parliamentary democracy was the most important factor.

“I was told that your government sentenced Chang Myon to 10 years’ imprisonment, denouncing him as an anti-state, pro-communist element, because he donated 700 dollars to a leftist group. That was totally unreasonable. World opinion, too, is against you. Chang Myon was your Prime Minister, just as I am Prime Minister. I am spending five million dollars a year as special public expenditure, by my own decision.”

In the meantime our appointed time ended, so we made to leave the room. But he who had been so cool towards us had a photograph taken with us and came outside to see us off.

Even today I cannot forget the impression I gained from his affection and passion for parliamentary democracy.

Finally, I should like to relate one more episode associated with those friendship visits. After finishing its scheduled visits, our party went to Hong Kong prior to returning to Seoul.

After promising to leave together the next day, three members of

my group went to the south Korean consulate in Hong Kong to a courtesy call while I alone stayed at the hotel. Since we had promised to dine together in the evening, I was waiting for them to return when a prominent figure resident in Hong Kong came to my room. We had a pleasant chat for a short time, and then he said that there was an old Buddhist temple behind the hotel and asked me to go with him to see it.

We went there. It was a small temple of a type which is common in our country. There was a crowd of people. I was told they were telling fortunes.

“Have a go at it,” my companion told me. I did not really believe in omens, but I had once seen my blind uncle telling fortunes in Seoul. Unable to decline the invitation of my acquaintance whom I had met after a long time and in order to relieve my loneliness on the journey, I shook the box of talismans and, for fun, took one out.

Then the diviner said to me, “You must refrain from going north.”

I was alarmed. On the eve of my departure for Seoul which was situated northwards, I would rather not have heard this.

Although by north they meant communist China, I could not but read matters otherwise. At the appointed time in the evening I returned to the hotel and sat at table with the three who had visited the consulate. They also did not look so well.

“Is there anything the matter with you? You don’t look well...”

“Oh, we’re sorry, dear chief! We have to go with you to Seoul, but look at this telegram that arrived at the consulate.”

They produced the telegram, and it read: “It is requested that the head return to his post and that others come to Seoul.”

“Oh, so... Well, never mind.”

Although it was a chance occurrence, I was surprised at the fact that the fortune-teller had been right. And feeling glad in my heart I told them that I had had my fortune told at the Buddhist temple.

“Really? You are lucky. Doesn’t it mean that fortune is smiling on you?”

The members of my group became considerably lighthearted and they all started joking.

“Ha, ha, ha... Anyway, let’s act according to the government’s instructions.”

It seemed to me that to follow the government’s instructions mean complying with what the fortune-teller had said and that I would enjoy good fortune in the future, so I was greatly relieved.

The following day, I saw them off and returned to Saigon.

On October 11, about one and a half months later, I had a telegram from Seoul, which read, “Your ambassador has been designated Foreign Minister. Prepare to depart.”

On October 15 another telegram came which said, “Wanted in Seoul by the 17th.”

I arrived at Kimpo airport and was met by Vice-Minister Li Won Gyong and all the other high-ranking officials of the Foreign Ministry though when I had returned after the April 19 incident there had been no sign of any officials. I was very glad, but on the other hand I could not help feeling rather repulsive against them because I thought they were behaving themselves more from material interests than from a sense of moral duty.

### *Texas Operation*

Before dealing with my experiences as Foreign Minister, I should like to mention here one or two things to show how Park Jung Hee, blind with parochialism already in the early days of being in power, mercilessly arrested and imprisoned people in order to remain in power.

Properly speaking, Park Jung Hee was a mere major general who was not particularly well known before the May 16 coup d’état. In the days of the Syngman Rhee regime he had never been counted among the central figures and was poor at speaking English.

Therefore, just as Nasser of Egypt used General Naguiv, so he intended to put up Chang Do Yong as an attractive front when he plotted the military coup d’état with some young men from the army.

Chang Do Yong came from Ryongchon County, North Pyongan Province, and served as a student soldier in the days of Japanese imperialist rule. After August 15 liberation he returned home and

helped to found the army, winning successive promotions. He went to America and graduated from staff officers' college. He gained the favour of the US army commander Magruder and was appointed as the Army Chief of Staff in February 1961.

So if Chang Do Yong was brought to the fore, it would not only make the coup d'état look as if it involved the whole army, but also reduce the possibility of the American high officials having doubts.

In addition it is worth mentioning his personal relationship with Park Jung Hee. Park Jung Hee was enormously indebted to Chang Do Yong for three reasons and had to repay the debts.

After the Ryosu-Sunchon incident, disloyal elements were purged from the army and Park Jung Hee was sentenced to penal servitude for life by court-martial. He avoided a life in prison thanks to a campaign by his colleagues from the Manchukuo army and was set free. But he found it difficult to make a living. Seeing this, Chang Do Yong, who had become the director of the Intelligence Agency, employed him as a nonsalaried civil official in the information division and gave him money to live on that had been collected from the division staff and that had been saved from the expenses for intelligence service.

Although the law on military affairs stipulated, "One who is dismissed for a criminal offence cannot be reinstated as an officer before two years have elapsed," when the June 25 war broke out, on the pretext of a shortage of officers, Chang Do Yong reinstated Park Jung Hee as a major, which had been his rank when he was dismissed, with the help of Hwang Hon Chin, then president of the board of reinstation examiners, and Chong Il Gwon, Army Chief of Staff.

And, although in the days when the Democratic Party was in power it was expected that he would be placed on the reserve list, Chang Do Yong who was the Second Army Corps Commander appointed Park Jung Hee second-in-command of his army corps with the assistance of Choe Gyong Rok, Army Chief of Staff.

In this way the personal ties between Park Jung Hee and Chang Do Yong were drawn exceptionally close.

Viewed in this light, it can be said to be inevitable that at the time of the May 16 coup d'état Park Jung Hee drew in Chang Do



Yong.

How then did Park Jung Hee drag in Chang Do Yong?

I heard the following story from a colonel who had been involved in the “autonomous force.”

On May 10, 1961 Park Jung Hee called on Army Chief of Staff Chang Do Yong. He stressed the need for a coup d’état and then asked him for his help. But he received a cold reception.

“I can’t help you.”

“Then, I beg you to support us at least. Even if you only do that, I will regard it as a noble deed, tantamount to assisting me.”

“No. I can neither assist you nor permit it. But I won’t do anything as cowardly as betraying you.”

“I see. Well, then, I believe that you have agreed to become our leader and I will leave. Thank you, Your Excellency Army Chief of Staff!”

At three a.m. on the 16th of May, six days later, Park Jung Hee acted; at five he broadcast that the Military Revolutionary Commission had seized all the levers of power in the state and at nine called on Chang Do Yong at army headquarters.

“We have carried out a revolution without informing you in advance. As originally we planned to act under the leadership of Your Excellency Army Chief of Staff, so even now we are determined to rescue the political situation under your guidance. We implore you to appreciate our true feelings and lead us.”

“I, the Army Chief of Staff, know nothing of the revolution. I want time to think it over.”

“Oh, but you must have known because I told you in advance. It is sad that you say such a thing now.”

“Then, do nothing more than advise the Democratic Party government and then retire.”

“Your Excellency, your cooperation is needed anyway to avoid bloodshed; we must proclaim martial law at once in order to maintain public peace and order. I want your approval.”

“It is not my duty. Martial law is a legal matter and should be proclaimed after consultations with the President.”

Realizing that he could allow no further delay, Park Jung Hee had the proclamation of emergency martial law broadcast in the name of Chang Do Yong.

Even after Park Jung Hee had left, Chang Do Yong hesitated to accept the office of chief martial law administrator. But, on the advice of Yun Bo Son, he complied at 4:30 p.m. on that day, while listening to the radio broadcast which reported the proclamation of martial law, issued in his name.

In these circumstances, in order to make the coup d'état a success, Park Jung Hee on May 19 renamed the Military Revolutionary Commission the Supreme Assembly for National Reconstruction and placed Chang Do Yong in the position of its president, and forming the first revolutionary cabinet on May 20, made Chang Do Yong concurrently assume the office of its head.

However, Park Jung Hee's innermost heart did not square with his action. He bitterly hated the lukewarm and opportunist attitude of Chang Do Yong towards the military coup. Though Park Jung Hee was deeply indebted to Chang Do Yong for what he had done for him in the past, he determined to exclude him and take power himself. First of all, Park Jung Hee made up his mind to oust him from the position of Army Chief of Staff and issued an emergency decree for national reconstruction on June 6 when the disturbances caused by the coup d'état had abated, which prohibited the chairman of the Supreme Assembly for National Reconstruction from holding any other post. And he appointed Kim Jong O Army Chief of Staff and Song Yo Chan the head of the Cabinet.

Unable to feel assured with this, Park Jung Hee confined Chang Do Yong to his house on July 2 and, on the following day, himself took office as the Chairman of the Supreme Assembly. And at dawn on July 9 he put Chang Do Yong in Mapo prison on the charge of "hampering the Military Revolutionary Commission in the implementation of its revolutionary duty."

This was not all Park Jung Hee did to force Chang Do Yong from power. He also imprisoned 18 officers on active service who came from Pyongan Provinces and had supported and followed him, simply because they were from the same province as him or had been his school fellows. As my memory runs, among them were commander of an airborne unit Colonel Pak Chi Ok, provost

marshal Colonel Mun Jae Jun, Pang Ja Myong, Li Hui Yong, Song Chan Ho, Kim Sok Ryul, An Yong Hak, Li Song Hun and others.

This was the so-called “counterrevolutionary case of the Chang Do Yong faction.” And, to tell the truth, through this Park Jung Hee ruined the anti-Park Jung Hee movement and the anti-Kim Jong Pil faction from the northwest regions. Hence people call this the “Texas operation.”

After this Park Jung Hee devised the “Alaska operation” in order to remove Kim Dong Ha, Pak Rim Hang and others who hailed from Hamgyong Provinces from the Supreme Assembly and fill it exclusively with people from Kyongsang Provinces: he also carried out the “Hawaii operation” to ostracize those from Cholla Provinces.

In this way, in the first days of coming to power, Park Jung Hee unhesitatingly committed unjustifiable acts by rousing provincial sentiments, in order to establish a foothold for his own rule. Because he promoted only those from the Kyongsang Provinces to responsible posts, people joked, “In Seoul even prostitutes complain that they cannot make their way because they do not come from Kyongsang Provinces.”

In those days I was unable to understand the true meaning of these words, but when I consider things again today I can only share their feelings. From the beginning he made frenzied efforts to strengthen the foothold for his rule. I think this was shown, among other things, by the farce of a military trial which was staged on a large scale immediately after the May 16 coup.

Because, as Park Jung Hee claimed, if the military coup had been brought about by the “corruption and inability” of the Democratic Party government, those who were involved in it should have been arrested and punished and if the military regime “inherited the April 19 spirit” those affiliated with the Liberal Party, which had been the target of the April 19 Uprising, should have incurred penalties.

But what happened eventually?

In the case of both the Liberal and Democratic Parties some people on the executive were arrested, but most of them were pardoned or released within a year. On the other hand, the

nationalists and reformists who advocated the sovereignty and independence of the country were apprehended and sentenced to severe punishment, and some were executed.

This was because, since they received the support of the people, if they had been left alone the military regime would have faced opposition.

Indeed, Park Jung Hee put up a “revolutionary pledge” as a dummy and behind it perpetrated diabolical cruelty to strengthen his individual dictatorship, and, on the other hand, submitted to foreign forces, thus committing the detestable act of selling the nation’s dignity.

While acting as Foreign Minister under the Park Jung Hee regime I witnessed this on too many occasions.

## On the Platform of the UN

### *I Only Suffered Shame*

After returning from Saigon I visited Park Jung Hee, Chairman of the Supreme Assembly for National Reconstruction.

He said to me: “After thinking over whether you should be assigned to the post of ambassador to Japan or that of foreign minister I have chosen the latter for you.” In this way I succeeded Kim Hong Il and became the ninth foreign minister of south Korea.

I went to the Foreign Ministry. This was just prior to Park Jung Hee’s visit to the United States, so it was rife with discussions about his itinerary.

It is the way of the “free world” for politicians to regard an invitation from the White House as an event on a par with receiving a peerage from a king.

However, in south Korea the military men who had launched the coup d’état were crestfallen because after the May 16 coup Chang Do Yong had expressed his desire to visit America, sending a congratulatory message on Kennedy’s birthday, but there had been no response from the White House. In this situation it was no wonder that they were making such a fuss about Park Jung Hee’s receipt of a special letter from Kennedy inviting him to visit

America in November of the same year.

It seemed to me that then Park Jung Hee tried even harder to show his “good faith” to the United States. Prior to his visit to America he imported 240 US-made motorcycles. Those from Japan were cheap and would have cost less in freight charges, but he obtained them from the United States. In addition, he ordered 400 cigar manufacturing machines to be used at the Monopoly Office to an American company at an additional expense of six million dollars. He even saw to it that on the eve of his departure for Washington, a grand meeting took place in Seoul Civic Hall in honour of his journey to the United States.

In this festive atmosphere, on November 11, 1961 Park Jung Hee left Kimpo airport by a special KAL plane for the United States, accompanied by a 13-member entourage including Ryu Yang Su (chairman of the foreign relations subcommittee of the Supreme Assembly), me, Chon Byong Gyu (minister of finance), and Om Yong Dal (chief of the Asian section of the Foreign Ministry).

When we broke our journey at Haneda airport in Japan. Park Jung Hee, who had once been a Japanese imperial army officer, bowed in reverence in the direction of the Imperial Palace.

Even the Japanese reporters who were present at the airport gazed at him in bewilderment. Nevertheless, he said in a dignified tone: “South Korea is ready to make concessions to Japan in order to normalize diplomatic relations.”

There was no doubt that it was because the imperial spirit had been revived in him that his hands were trembling. The scene was too shameful for me, a member of the south Korean Cabinet, to witness.

Also, it was remarkable to witness what happened at the welcoming dinner given by Japanese Prime Minister Ikeda that evening.

When the drinking of toasts had almost reached an end and conversation was about to begin, Park Jung Hee abruptly rose from his seat, glass in hand.

What’s the matter with him? I wondered, thinking perhaps he was doing so because he was ill-mannered, and I stole a glance at him. He went up to a white-haired old man sitting in a corner of the

hall and greeted him with a deep bow and then asked him to drink a toast, holding the glass in both his hands.

Judging by where he was seated, it seemed that he was not in a high position. But Park Jung Hee behaved obsequiously towards him. So I inquired about him, only to discover that he had formerly been president of the Manchukuo military academy and had been invited by the Japanese Foreign Ministry at the special request of Park Jung Hee.

The behaviour of Park Jung Hee, who had studied at the Manchukuo military academy and esteemed his “teacher,” might have given a good impression to the Japanese, but I was infuriated. This man had been a soldier of Japanese imperialism when the Japanese invaded the Asian continent, and one of those who had branded as “bandits” large numbers of our champions of the anti-Japanese patriotic movement who fought for the independence of the country in the wilderness of Manchuria, and he had taken the lead in suppressing them. But Park Jung Hee held him in high esteem, bowing low to him, disregarding his own honour. It took me aback to see it.

This was not all about which I, as a minister of the south Korean government who accompanied him, felt shame during our short stay in Tokyo.

The same may be said of his talks with Ikeda held at the official residence of the Japanese Prime Minister on the next day. The talks lasted for some two hours. At first, they were conducted with me from the south Korean side and Foreign Minister Kosaka from the Japanese side in attendance. However, after a while Park Jung Hee expressed a desire that the talks proceed between the two without interpreters. So we were obliged to leave and the talks became something of a political and economic *tete-a-tete*.

After the talks Ikeda came out arm in arm with Park Jung Hee and said, beaming, with his hand upraised: “Everything was a success. It went all right.”

Because Park Jung Hee told me nothing, I had no idea why Ikeda was so delighted, but through the statement he made at the press conference I could guess that an important agreement had been reached on the problems pending at the south Korea–Japan talks.

This implied that Japan was paving the way for reinvading south Korea. So it was not without reason that the Prime Minister of Japan was jubilant.

But, I felt shame once again when I discovered that Ikeda had ribbed Park Jung Hee about his good command of Japanese during the tete-a-tete.

In fact, out of consideration, when I left Seoul I had taken the chief of the Asian section, who was strong in Japanese, with me and suggested to Park Jung Hee: "Chairman, I am taking a man who is strong in Japanese as an interpreter. I would like you not to speak Japanese at official meetings in Japan."

However at the tete-a-tete with Ikeda he spoke Japanese so fluently that the former said, partly in fun: "Your Excellency chairman Park speaks Japanese far better than people from our northeastern region or Kagoshima." I felt an urge to hit out at his mouth.

On the night of the 12th Park Jung Hee left Haneda airport and arrived in Washington in the early morning of the 14th, having flown via Seattle and Chicago. A welcoming ceremony was held at the airport. From the US side Vice-President Johnson, Secretary of State Rusk and US ambassador to south Korea Burgler, took the platform. In this situation, if we were to follow diplomatic protocol, after Park Jung Hee should be placed the Foreign Minister and then the south Korean ambassador to the United States Chong Il Gwon. However, Yu Yang Su took the platform where I should have stood, in the capacity of chairman of the foreign relations subcommittee of the Supreme Assembly and I was placed below the platform. Even below the platform I was not ranked first. Kim Jan Chun, who had come as the head of the advance party in charge of the guard, stood ahead of me in the name of "executive member of the Supreme Assembly."

This could be regarded as inevitable because under the military regime high officials were ranked in the order of President, chairman of the Supreme Assembly, vice-chairman of the Supreme Assembly, Prime Minister, chief justice, chiefs of subcommittees of the Supreme Assembly, executive members of the Supreme Assembly, Minister of the Economic Planning Board, director of the Central Intelligence Agency and ministers and I, foreign minister,

stood 37th in order. I would have been able to put up with this if the ceremony had been held between ourselves. But under the eyes of key figures from America I was embarrassed not because I was slighted but because I felt they were sneering, thinking that the armed green horns who had just seized power did not even know the correct diplomatic protocol. I cannot forget still now that upon his arrival in Washington Park Jung Hee stated before correspondents that the permanent presence of the US army in south Korea was necessary and that US armaments were needed for modernizing the south Korean army.

At the two sessions of talks with Kennedy Park Jung Hee explained the political and economic problems which confronted south Korea and repeatedly pledged that he would transfer power to a civil government in the summer of 1963. Kennedy was satisfied with this and made a definite promise to render economic aid to cooperate with the military government.

On November 18 Park Jung Hee left Washington and returned home on November 25 by way of New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Hawaii.

I left Park Jung Hee and his suite in New York to attend a session of the UN General Assembly.

### *Imprudent Actions at the UN*

Having parted from Park Jung Hee and his party, I joined the south Korean delegation of Chong Il Gwon (south Korean ambassador to the United States), Li Su Yong (south Korean ambassador to the UN), Kim Jun Yop (professor at Koryo University) and Kim Dong Hwan (minister of the south Korean embassy in the United States) in order to attend the 16th Session of the UN General Assembly.

The south Korean delegation had approached the UN mainly concerning the question of Korea's reunification since the 13th Session of the UN General Assembly in 1958. But now it was decided to stress at its 16th session the need for the military government in south Korea. This was because the 16th session would be the first at which the military government was represented and south Korea was having difficulty in finding



acceptance in the international community at that time.

But I thought in those days that we could not overlook the fact that the military government was creating an important “pattern” in the modern political history. I could mention the Egyptian coup d’état by Nasser in 1952, the Pakistani coup d’état by Ayub Khan in 1958, the Cuban revolution by Castro in 1959 and the Syrian coup d’état in 1960, and so on.

So, having prepared my speeches in English, I was able to read my paper calmly before the session. The context of my speech was this:

“In south Korea the Democratic Party was too weak. The country was in disorder due to frequent internal factional strife and some students even went so far as to demand contact with the north at Panmunjom.

“South Korea, which was aligned with the free world, started to move away from the anti-communist stand. It was to stop this that the soldiers rose up. They have no ambition for political power. They have pledged publicly that once they have swept away the mountain of corruption and injustice, they will restore civil government and return to military duty.”

As I expected, my speech met with the opposition of many delegates from the communist bloc and third world countries while some delegates from pro-US countries appeared to sympathize with it. In particular, the delegate from Australia gave me active support. Prime Minister Menzies seemed to be paying special attention to me because I had visited Australia as the head of a goodwill mission immediately after the May 16 coup d’état.

The next year, in the autumn of 1962, I attended the 17th session of the UN General Assembly as the head of a delegation which consisted of eleven including Chong Il Gwon, Li Su Yong, Kim Yong U (former Defence Minister), Li Dong Won (chief of the presidential secretariat) and Li Yong Hui (professor at Seoul University).

This time, it was decided that we should again bring up for discussion the traditionally-submitted question of reunification.

In the year since the 16th session more than 20 countries had established diplomatic relations with south Korea, so it was easy for

us to contact foreign countries.

There is one thing I must mention concerning the 17th session. The south Korean delegation had a meeting with the US delegation headed by Stevenson to prepare a draft resolution.

Stevenson had once, as a presidential candidate from the Democratic Party, stood against Eisenhower only to be defeated. He was an important official who had been appointed head of the US delegation to the UN by Eisenhower after his inauguration as President.

I told Stevenson that it would be better for us not to submit a conditional draft to the current session because north Korea had disregarded the UN twice. I said this in view of the fact that at the 15th Session of the UN General Assembly a draft resolution to invite north Korea to discuss the Korean question on the condition that it accepted the authority and rights of the UN was adopted on the initiative of the US delegation, and at the 16th session a similar draft resolution was adopted, after a proposal submitted by the delegates from Greece and Thailand, but north Korea had ignored all this.

However, the US delegate did not readily accept my proposal and told me that the US intends to invite north Korea, too, and that if south Korea wants to check this stand, he should consult with the US State Department.

So I rose immediately and went to see the assistant undersecretary in charge of international organizations at the State Department. After listening to me he initially tried to shift the matter to the mission at the UN. But I pestered him to get him to take a final decision flexibly in accordance with the situation prevailing there. After all I upset the draft resolution on conditional invitation of north Korea. It was my view that there was no need to extend an invitation to north Korea again, after she had already ignored two invitations and that north Korea should not be allowed to attend the UN.

When my demand was accepted, I boasted of this as “a great victory” which had been won by south Korea at the 17th Session of the UN General Assembly.

When I think of this I can only feel a sense of shame. Dominated

by the anti-communist idea, in the final analysis, I was more hostile to north Korea and more opposed to national reunification than the US delegates.

But when I come to examine myself today I see myself as a man without shame.

## South Korean–Japanese Foreign Ministers’ Talks

### *Honour and Insult*

Prior to attending the 17th Session of the UN General Assembly in the autumn of 1962, I had taken part in the South Korean–Japanese Foreign Ministers’ Talks and had attended a preliminary meeting in the spring of that year.

The south Korean–Japanese talks had been dragging on for more than ten years, but reached no agreement. So, at the beginning of 1962 the matters pending were discussed at subcommittee level.

However, because the difference of opinion between the two sides was so wide, the both sides thought that a shortcut lay in a political settlement rather than in a businesslike compromise, and agreed to hold foreign ministers’ talks.

As a result, from the 12th of March, 1962 talks on political affairs came to be held between the Japanese Foreign Minister Kosaka and me at the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

The other participants from the south Korean side were Pae Ui Hwan (south Korean ambassador to Japan), Mun Chol Sun (head of the political affairs department at the Foreign Ministry), Choe Yong Taek (counsellor at the embassy in Japan), Om Yong Dal (chief of the Asian Section at the Foreign Ministry) and Choe Gyu Ha and Li Han Gi were included as advisors.

Although I had previously fought against the Japanese imperialists on the Chinese mainland and accepted the surrender of Japanese troops at the Burmese front and in Guangdong Province, I felt my breast swell with a sense of honour, sitting face to face with the Japanese delegate and talking to him, having quarrelled with Japanese imperialism in the past.

I made up my mind to discharge my duties well as the south

Korean representative.

At the talks both sides exchanged greetings and agreed on an agenda before immediately entering into discussion. From the first day the views of the two sides were sharply divided. By the 17th, formal meetings had been held on two occasions and informal meetings on three, but there seemed to be no hope of a compromise.

In particular the question of reparation was hotly debated.

The Japanese side had allotted less than 50 million dollars exclusively for reparation and 300 million dollars in all, including sums as gratuitous aid and an economic loan.

They did this reluctantly, feeling unable to refuse.

In fact, at that time Japan admitted the crimes she had committed in the countries under her occupation during the so-called Great East-Asian War and was paying specific amounts of reparation to those countries which had suffered from her occupation.

In concrete terms, Japan paid 540 million dollars in reparation and 250 million dollars as a loan to the Philippines, 400 million dollars of reparation and 50 million dollars as an economic loan to Indonesia and 200 million dollars in reparation and 500 million dollars as a loan to Burma.

But Japan declined to make any payment to south Korea which she had occupied for nearly half a century and whose human and material resources she had taken away. Japan was reluctant to use even the term "reparation" and tried to express it in the words "free aid" and "economic loan."

Seeing this attitude of Japan's, I thought: "We should not be servile to Japan and need not show her any mercy. We fought against Japanese imperialism to the last. We should face Japan in a dignified manner."

So I expressed my opinion at the talks in this way: "To begin with, we must consider whether the mental affliction and material damage our nation suffered in the 36 years of Japanese occupation and the blood shed by our martyred patriots can be paid for by any amount of money. If international custom is to be followed, Japan should, first of all, pay reparation to Korea to show that Japan is

willingly burying the past.

“Here the amount of money offers no problem. The payment of a specific sum as indemnity is indispensable for consoling the souls of the Korean people and for making the relations between Korea and Japan truly equal and reciprocal. Japan wants to offer gratuitous aid without paying reparation. But it is certain that it, too, is no more than aid. Moreover, to accept a loan means running into debt. How can it be that we have come to call in a loan but go back instead saddled with a debt.”

The question of Tok Island, too, was seriously discussed.

My stand on this question was unshakable.

The Japanese side maintained that south Korea should agree to bring the question of Tok Island before the International Court of Justice before diplomatic relations could be normalized.

Among our advisors was professor Li Han Gi and he said that if Japan went to court we would win, and suggested that Japan save her face at the International Court of Justice and settle the question of reparation to her own better advantage.

But I flatly refused this, saying: “The point is not victory or defeat. It can be said that any debate on the question of Tok Island would be a nonsense. Tok Island historically belongs to our country. Why then should we haggle over it with them? It is like suddenly asserting that Ullung and Cheju Islands belong to Korea.”

Someone derided this stand of mine, calling it “nationalist obstinacy.” However, it seemed to me that this man and his ilk were those who tried to rationalize their servile posture towards Japan by using the term “nationalist obstinacy.” I realized that their attitude was a reflection of the colonial policy of the imperialists.

In this way, the foreign ministers’ talks for resolving the deadlock which persisted in the south Korea–Japan talks did not produce any satisfactory results. In fact, at that time the south Korean people were strong in opposing the high-handed attitude of the Japanese side at the talks. The south Korean government should have stood firm against Japan, relying on this spirit displayed by the people. But, on the contrary, it suppressed the people with violence and only probed Japan’s motives. As a result it was held in contempt by the Japanese side.

This caused me pain in heart.

I was infuriated all the more to hear that after I had left the foreign ministers' talks, the south Korean ambassador to Japan, Pae Ui Hwan who had been present at the talks visited the Japanese Foreign Ministry and told them that he had the pleasure to inform them that the intention of the south Korean government was not being transmitted by Foreign Minister Choe but through Kim Jong Pil "line."

It was intolerable to me that such an anomalous channel of communication, through the director of the south Korean Central Intelligence Agency and not the foreign minister, the person responsible, be used. In addition, in November that year the "Kim-Ohira Memorandum" was suddenly made public.

However, I had an inkling of the fact that immediately after the establishment of the KCIA Kim Jong Pil had promoted a scheme to find an agreement between south Korea and Japan, gabbling that if he was to be a man of influence in the political world of south Korea, he should take the initiative in the south Korea-Japan talks and play a major part in normalizing diplomatic relations between south Korea and Japan.

It was also Kim Jong Pil's doing, in his efforts to keep an eye on our party, that when I had political talks with the Japanese Foreign Minister, Kosaka, Choe Yong Taek, the counsellor at the embassy in Japan, was sent to attend. For even after the talks had ended without result, Kim Jong Pil had Choe Yong Taek remain in office as counsellor and let him make constant contact with Japanese right-wing political leaders such as Kishi Nobusuke and Kodama Yoshio, and through them he acted on the Japanese government.

But I little thought that in November Kim Jong Pil himself would meet Japanese Foreign Minister Ohira to discuss the question of reparation and settle the matter so that Japan would offer 300 million dollars as free aid, 200 million dollars as a financial loan and over 100 million dollars as a private loan.

Judging from the "Park-Ikeda" talks in 1961 and the "Kim-Ohira" talks in 1962, it was clear to me that I was not merely cut off from other political leaders but completely disregarded. My spirit rebelled against this. So at the very beginning of the year

1963 I expressed to Park Jung Hee my intention to resign as foreign minister.

However 1963 was the year when Park Jung Hee was expected to transfer power to civil government. From the beginning of the year the political atmosphere seemed threatening and public opinion was stirred up. This might be the reason why my resignation was not accepted immediately. Things were getting serious.

In the wake of the “February 18 Declaration” in which Park Jung Hee affirmed his non-participation in a civil government, the “February 27 Oath” in which he again stressed the matter was made public. On March 8 it was reported that Kim Dong Ha and Pak Rim Hang and others had conspired against the military government. On March 15 servicemen on active duty held a demonstration in demand of the “continuation of the military government” and the “total prohibition of political activities.” This was the first demonstration of servicemen on active duty since the establishment of the south Korean government.

The people had no idea where the country was going and the prestige of the military government had disappeared. To cope with the confused situation, the government held a Cabinet meeting on March 14 and discussed the question of declaring emergency martial law, but no agreement was reached and all the ministers expressed their intention to resign.

The next day, on March 15, my resignation and that of several others were accepted. In fact, as I was informed later, I had been dismissed because, on the afternoon of the previous day, ambassador Pae Ui Hwan had returned from Japan and told Park Jung Hee that if Choe Dok Sin remained in office as foreign minister the Japanese government would be displeased.

For myself, at the beginning of the year I had already announced my intention to resign, so I retained no lingering desire to remain as a minister. But, fundamentally speaking, I was not wrong at all to express, as minister of the south Korean government, the deep-seated resentment of the Korean people towards Japan. That was only natural.

Nevertheless, the Japanese thought that if I remained as

minister, it would be impossible to carry out the policy of the two governments which was aimed at settling the political problems between south Korea and Japan.

It broke my heart to think of whom this kind of government existed for. Feeling that my clear national conscience had been outraged, I could not hide my resentment.

I played a part in the military government because I had a naive hope that human obligation and honour would triumph and the government supposedly took anti-communism as its policy and aimed at sweeping away injustice and corruption and at establishing democracy. But when I reexamined matter I decided that I should seek for a new stand.

So, it may be said that I experienced both honour and contempt for one year and five months that I acted as foreign minister.

### *The South Korea–Japan Talks Reached Agreement*

Then how did the South Korea–Japan Talks reach a settlement?

I was not opposed to the normalization of diplomatic relations between south Korea and Japan. However, when I think of how Park Jung Hee and Kim Jong Pil behaved with regard to this, I cannot repress the indignation that surges up in my mind.

Originally, the South Korea–Japan Talks had started with preliminary talks through the mediation of Seebolt, Director of the Foreign Affairs Department of the MacArthur Command, on October 20, 1951, and the talks reached agreement on June 22, 1965, 14 years later. During these years the talks experienced many twists and turns and in bringing them to a settlement the United States was more active than Japan and south Korea. In other words, the South Korea–Japan Talks were pushed forward under the constant pressure of the United States.

Therefore, the process by which talks were brought to an agreement was unthinkable apart from the United States. This was because it could be called the process of putting into practice US strategy towards south Korea, and, further, US strategy towards Asia.

As is known, the US strategy towards Korea was to turn south



Korea into a bridgehead and its advance base in Asia.

However, in 1950 in Asia communists swept over the Chinese mainland and concluded a treaty of friendship and alliance with the Soviet Union, and the danger of war was worsening in Viet Nam.

The United States started the June 25 war to realize its strategy towards Korean peninsula, but could not avoid a crushing defeat.

In addition, the situation became complicated in Pakistan and Malaysia, too, making northeast Asia apparently the centre of the anti-imperialist national liberation movement of the world.

In these conditions the United States, as the ringleader of world imperialism, needed to render more economic and military aid to foreign countries in order to suppress the anti-imperialist national liberation movement which was becoming widespread. However, the United States continuously showed a deficit in its balance of payments and the dollar crisis was growing daily. Under such circumstances the United States devised a scheme to make use of West Germany and Japan, its junior allies, which had revived after World War II.

Here, it calculated that in Asia it could clear the way for Japan's inroads into south Korea and make the former give economic and military support to the latter, and thus lighten the American burden in south Korea and bring the south Korean army and the Japanese self-defence forces to cooperate with each other. In Japan, where the militarists who had been prominent during colonial domination, clamouring for the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" were in power, there was no great desire to be subordinated to the United States, but she welcomed the suggestion of the United States with open arms because she could cultivate a south Korean economic market, establish a buffer zone to prevent her being infiltrated by communists and effect her colonial domination of south Korea.

On the other hand, although the south Korean government tended to accede without question to any demand of the United States, it feared the deeply rooted antipathy of the people to Japan and held up the normalization of diplomatic relations between south Korea and Japan in order to appease its proud people.

So, it can be said that the South Korea-Japan Talks were, in essence, aimed at concluding a political and military alliance

between south Korea, Japan and the United States based on US strategy towards south Korea, and further, US strategy towards Asia.

That is why at first the United States only manipulated the South Korea–Japan Talks behind the scenes so as not to leave the impression that it had meddled in the talks, fearing that it might excite the Korean and Japanese people to convert the movement against the South Korea–Japan Talks into an anti-imperialist and anti-US struggle. But, entering the 1960s the United States, driven by the difficulty of its own circumstances, became more open and put pressure on the two countries. The eloquent proof of this is the US–Japan negotiations held on June 21, 1961.

At the negotiations Ikeda said: “Japan attaches greater importance to south Korea than to China in some respects. Whatever else may be said, south Korea has been closest to Japan geographically and historically since ‘Ōkuninushi no Mikoto’ (one of the gods in the Japanese myth) and is in a position to influence the fate of Japan. Especially, should Pusan become communist, it will seriously affect the security of Japan. So Japan must take great interest in the anti-communist system of south Korea. I think that perhaps the United States is of the same opinion.”

Kennedy responded: “I quite agree with you. But it is a matter of regret that the political system of the countries in the Asian free camp is very unstable, and it is hard to understand the degree of popularity of their governments...”

“It is delightful that the Japanese approach south Korea with such a view. The United States intends to urge south Korea to hurry the normalization of diplomatic relations with Japan. At the same time, we want to make south Korea introduce democracy in its government as early as possible. I hope that Japan shows due regard for this and hastens the normalization of diplomatic relations.”

This could be called a repetition of the “Taft-Katsura secret agreement.”

In accordance with a secret understanding, on November 12, 1961 Ikeda met Park Jung Hee and put forward an important proposal relating the matters pending at the South Korea–Japan

Talks. And in order to effect it, Park Jung Hee blurted out, “I will carry the South Korea–Japan Talks to success in defiance of the censure of the people,” and Kim Jong Pil clamoured: “Even if I am called the second Li Wan Yong, I will settle the talks.”

This is reminiscent of the five traitors of Ulsa.

So, when the “Kim-Ohira memorandum” was made public in November 1961, the people formed the “All-national committee for a struggle against the humiliating diplomacy towards Japan” and the “national committee for a struggle to defend the motherland” and the students staged demonstrations on March 24 and June 3, shouting, “Down with the Park regime,” but he sent armed soldiers to put down the demonstrations.

In addition, in February 1965 US Secretary of State Rusk flew to Seoul by way of Tokyo and demanded that the South Korea–Japan Talks should reach agreement by June. Accordingly, on June 5 the authorities of south Korea and Japan sent their officials to a hotel in Hakone, Japan and made them work out an agreement after all-night session. Then, at 5 p.m. on June 22 an agreement was signed at the Japanese Prime Minister’s residence.

I was told that after their defeat in the war the Japanese colonial rulers in August 1945 clamoured, while fleeing back to their country, “Wait and see, we will be back again after 20 years,” and after just 20 years the second Ulsa treaty was concluded. This might be a strange coincidence.

Therefore I think that while the “Taft-Katsura secret agreement” in 1905 was geared to the conclusion of the Ulsa treaty for Japan to annex Korea, the “Kennedy–Ikeda Talks” in 1961 resulted in the conclusion of the south Korea–Japan agreement in 1965 to allow Japan to reinvade south Korea.

I should like to say that viewed from this angle, the United States and Japan were jackals and wolves which, historically, in their own interests have cooperated, and sucked Korean blood and gnawed Korean bones.

During My Time as Ambassador to West  
Germany

## *Befriending Distant States and Antagonizing Neighbours*

After resigning as foreign minister, I visited Park Jung Hee to give him my retirement address. He looked somewhat embarrassed.

“What do you want to do in the future, sir?”

“I don’t want to take someone else’s post and oust him. I would like to succeed ambassador Sin Ung Gyun who is apparently going to Harvard.”

“Agreed. That’s fine. Please wait a while.”

At that time Sin Ung Gyun was ambassador to West Germany. Park Jung Hee asked me to wait for a while because the term at Harvard University begins in September and if he remained in Bonn for a few more months he would be given a German decoration, according to established practice.

Kim Yong Sik, who was appointed foreign minister after me, could have treated me as a stand-by ambassador, but showed no concern for me at all. So I became a man without an occupation. I received six months’ retirement allowance at 40,000 *won* per month. With this I repaired my house that I had not tended for a year and a half because I had been using the foreign minister’s official residence, only to find it difficult to make ends meet. As a last resort, I determined to take the necessary measures for receiving a pension, as I had been in military and government service for a long time. But Li Sok Je in the general affairs department refused on the pretext that I had not served long enough.

So I spent the whole of my retirement allowance for five months and became penniless before, in September 1963, I was installed as ambassador to West Germany.

At that time someone advised me to run for assembly in Chung District, Seoul. Chung District was Chong Il Hyong’s constituency. My advisor suggested that, recollecting what my father had experienced in 1950, I should take revenge.

But I had no mind to do so. In addition, I was not satisfied with the tradition of the assembly that slighted the platform of the assembly and made less of it than the yard of the Tongdaemun market in Seoul.

Another one of my friends counselled me to go to the United States to study. In south Korea it was the practice to send people abroad who had been demoted in the name of “study.” But to lead a life of research on the wrong side of fifty hardly appealed to me. My refusal to become a member of the assembly and to study abroad and my taking office as ambassador to West Germany were not motivated by anything specific.

I did so, to sum up, because the post had fortuitously fallen vacant and because I was disgusted at the sight of some pro-Japanese traitors to the nation who submitted meekly to the arrogant Japanese. And perhaps another reason was the fact that I was still indignant at being insulted at the South Korean–Japanese Foreign Ministers’ Talks.

In these circumstances I wanted to go abroad. But this required me to have a knowledge of the language. I had learned German while attending the Central Military Academy in China during the period from 1933 to 1936. After graduation I had taken charge of translation and interpretation in German at the translation department under the military commission of the nationalist government.

To add to this, in those days West Germany had already wrought “wonders on the Rhine” and was known as a country that had been restored and developed economically and technically on the debris of war. So I was inclined to contribute to checking the new invasion by Japan, which is near us geographically, and to the building of the “Republic of Korea” by securing the economic and technical aid of West Germany, a powerful far-off country, in the way that one befriends distant states and antagonizes neighbours.

As I expected, in West Germany I felt that it was full steam ahead for reconstruction.

It pleased me that Kim Yong Ju, who had once served as the planning coordinator in the Foreign Ministry when I had worked there, held the post of minister at the south Korean embassy. However he was reluctant to write my general’s rank on the formal document to be sent to the West German government.

He said, “Please, don’t use your military rank, general, in West Germany. Democratic states do not like military ranks.”

A few days later I met the Australian ambassador. He was an acquaintance I had made in Saigon where he had been a diplomat when I was the ambassador to Viet Nam.

In 1961 when I visited Australia as the head of a goodwill mission, he had introduced me to Prime Minister Menzies.

He said: "You will be happy because you can use the military rank of general. To my shame I am no more than a lieutenant colonel."

Then I tried to ascertain which of the two men had been right and I discovered that the Australian ambassador had been correct. It seemed that the Germans were fond of servicemen and respected generals in particular.

From then on I made it a rule to enter my military rank of general in formal documents.

This was an episode in my early days of being in office in West Germany.

The following are two unforgettable events associated with my life in West Germany, which extended over four years until I resigned from the post of ambassador and returned home in September, 1967 after becoming patriarch of Chondoism in April of the same year.

### *Embarrassment*

One of them was the mutual visits of the heads of the two states. On December 6, 1964 Park Jung Hee made a week's visit to West Germany, accompanied by 13 people including his Ryuk Yong Su, Chang Gi Yong (Deputy Prime Minister and concurrently director of the Economic Planning Board), Li Dong Won (Foreign Minister), Pak Chung Hun (Minister of Commerce and Industry), Kim Dong Hwan (Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee of the National Assembly) and Kim Jong O (The Army Chief of Staff).

West German President Lubke paid a return visit to south Korea from March 2 to 8, 1967.

In the diplomatic arena, it is customary to regard an ambassador who has made possible mutual visits between the heads of state and the country of his residence as one who has discharged the duty of

ambassador at the highest level. But I do not want to sing my own praises for having done my duty admirably but to mention the embarrassment I felt when Park Jung Hee visited West Germany.

At that time, in preparing the draft of a south Korea–West Germany communique, the West German side referred in it to the question of Korea’s reunification, the keynote of which was that West Germany recognized the “Republic of Korea” as the one and only power on the Korean peninsula and wanted to realize north–south reunification through the holding of a general election on the principle of democracy. It was an expression which was often used concerning the question of Korea’s reunification.

But Park Jung Hee was embarrassed and asked his suite if they had consulted the US side in advance, and he was reluctant even to use such an expression.

So, the joint statement were attended to this, “The leaders of both countries reaffirm the just right of the two peoples in their efforts to reunify the divided territory.”

I, too, had been aware of the fact that in formulating its foreign policy the south Korean government needed the approval of the United States or to consult it beforehand.

To take as an instance the case where I toured the southeastern regions of Asia as the head of a goodwill mission after the May 16 coup d’état; when I went to a country, I called first on the US ambassador there under the pretext of asking his advice and reported to him the purpose of my visit, and then I acted according not to his advice but to his instructions.

But, I really could not believe that a man called the “head of state” could visit a friendly country without any settled conviction of his own.

He was in no way different from those who concluded the “Ulsa treaty” towards the end of the Li dynasty, which stated that the Korean government should not conclude any international treaty or agreement without the approval of Japan.

With this thought I, who had flattered myself that Park Jung Hee’s visit to West Germany enhanced the prestige of the “Republic of Korea” in the heart of Europe, felt ashamed of being the south Korean ambassador, and quite envied the officials of the West

German government who acted with a firm conviction even though US troops were stationed there, too.

### *The Export of Manpower*

Another thing I cannot forget from my time in West Germany was that for the first time the way was opened for south Korea to export manpower to West Germany.

According to the “Treaty of Mutual Cooperation” which was concluded in 1964, miners and hospital nurses from south Korea were sent to Germany.

In April 1965 these miners went on strike, motivated by a wage problem connected with racial discrimination.

As ambassador I visited the miners and persuaded them to come to a satisfactory agreement with their employers and consoled myself with the short-sighted view that the export of manpower relieved the unemployment at home.

But, when I consider the fact that even today the south Korean government uses the export of manpower as a means of earning foreign currency and earns several billion dollars a year from it and that these miners cannot live in peace abroad, tormented as they are by labour inspectors who are under the surveillance of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, I, who opened the way for them, feel that I should be blamed rather than applauded.

### *The East Berlin Incident and I*

While in Seoul early in March 1967 to receive the President of West Germany who was visiting south Korea, I was elected patriarch of Chondoism, so I resigned as ambassador to West Germany. However, in May of that year I went to West Germany again because I thought that as I had lived in Bonn for four years I ought to give a formal address of retirement to the West Germany government and settle my accounts.

Around this time Ryang Du Won was living in West Germany as the chief of the KCIA and was operating under the name of Li Sang Ho, counsellor at the south Korean embassy.



I remember that it was June 10 when he called on me and told me that south Korea intended to put on an exhibition of Taekwon-Do at the Munich Olympics in 1972 and that he was going to look for a site as preparation for it. He asked me to go with him.

So we travelled together to Munich. We stayed at a hotel for two days and inspected various sites. On the third day Ryang told me that he was obliged to return to Bonn first because he had received an urgent phone call from Seoul, but that I might stay longer. With this he returned to Bonn alone.

On June 15 I returned. When I met Ryang Du Won, he told me that in order to ensure secrecy in discharging his duties he had brought dispatches and receipts of all official documents and telegrams in the embassy temporarily under his control and asked for my ex post facto approval.

I suspected that he had lured me out of the embassy so that he could do evil while I was away. However, I thought it would be rather improper to inquire into the matter closely, so I connived at it, without making any inquiries.

But, a few days later Waguner, Dietman of West Germany and the president of West Germany-South Korea Friendship Society came to me to make a protest, producing a letter which many Dietmen had signed.

“Ambassador Choe, what is all this? Your embassy has been rounding up south Korean residents in West Germany. I question your sanity. This has caused serious trouble in the Diet and I find myself in an awkward position. I want to receive your written answer at least.”

It struck me that I had been deceived by Ryang Du Won. However, I did not colour and I let my secretary write then and there an answer to this effect.

“I, the ambassador neither knew about the incident of its planning stage nor took part in it in its initiation. When I became aware of it, it was already out of hand.

“If the incident is one that infringes upon the sovereignty of West Germany, I myself must be held responsible, and it is a matter of regret.”

Waguner seemed to accept that I was not involved in the

incident, and left in silence.

But it was evident that things had assumed serious proportions.

Although I only came to know the full fact after some considerable time, the incident was really incredible.

39 KCIA agents had come from Seoul and formed groups of three or four each from June 18. Then they were sent to more than 20 regions in West Germany to hunt for north Korean spies. I was told that some of them went as far as France. It was a frightening thing.

One day Ryang Du Won came to see me and said:

“Ambassador, please phone Yun I Sang and tell him that you have been summoned home and want to meet him in Bonn so that he comes here.”

“That’s impossible,” I flatly refused.

Yun I Sang was a world-famous Korean composer of modern music residing in West Germany. When Park Jung Hee visited West Germany in 1964 he, as the chairman of the association of Korean residents, and his wife warmly welcomed him.

At that time I payed my respects to him, saying, “I wish you would write music to reflect not only Korea but also China, Japan and the whole of the East.”

How could I call him to me when I knew full well what was happening in Bonn and that they were going to capture him? I could not bring myself to do it.

I not only refused him, but also said:

“Don’t involve official diplomats in such a thing and don’t use their vehicles either. The diplomatic staff including the ambassador should be used to smooth any problems. If they are involved in such plays, they must hide themselves away afterwards.”

When I said this the staff of the embassy seemed to feel relieved. But, I wondered what had been reported to Seoul; a few days later Foreign Minister Li Dong Won ordered me by telegram to cooperate in the operations in progress. But I did not obey him.

A few days later I was told Yun I Sang had received a letter written apparently in my hand and had come, feeling secure, to the south Korean embassy in Bonn to receive a signed letter from President Park, only to be captured by KCIA agents, interrogated

him for two days in this way:

“What did you do as a north Korean spy?” “What are your relations with Ambassador Choe Dok Sin?” etc. When he persisted in claiming his innocence, they took him to KCIA headquarters in Seoul, saying, “Then go to Seoul and tell that to Director Kim Hyong Uk.”

I was stunned. I made a roundabout investigation and learnt that the operational practice used by the KCIA agents from Seoul was unrivaled in craftiness.

Taking into account the fact that the suspects were all intellectuals, they used to kidnap them and take them to Seoul, taking advantage of their desire for fame.

They classified the suspects into groups A, B and C. The men in group A were leading figures to whom they gave a letter of invitation from the President and return air tickets, saying, “Sir, I have heard much of you. Not long ago President Park said that you should be invited to the celebrations of Korea’s Independence Day (15 August).”

And to the men in group B who had a doctorate and were teaching they gave invitation cards from the KCIA director, remarking: “The doctor’s august name is widely known at home. Recently it was decided to invite many excellent Korean scholars who are active abroad to the celebrations of Korea’s Independence Day so that they might make some important contribution to the development of the homeland.”

And they got men in group C which consisted of south Korean students studying in West Germany and south Korean miners working there, to apply for permission to return home at the south Korean embassy, saying, “Hey, you! Your life here has come under suspicion, so our government is looking out for you. It seems that many people are going to return home to attend the celebrations of Independence Day. I think that it would be desirable for you to go together with them on this occasion and confess everything.”

In this way they brought together scores of people in the south Korean embassy in West Germany. Yun I Sang seemed to be treated as a double A class man.

The KCIA agents secretly escorted the suspects to Hamburg by

car to avoid being noticed, and then sent them in custody to Seoul via Alaska by Japanese airline.

Some of the suspects whom they planned to kidnap took flight, sensing that matters had become serious. Among those who were being taken to Seoul one wrote a warning letter to his friend in France when they arrived in Alaska; and another shouted in German to make the critical state of affairs known when they landed in Alaska.

As a result, the abduction conspiracy came to be known to the world and West Germany became a hornets' nest.

The West German government lodged a strong protest against the abductions regarding them as a gross violation of its sovereignty and demanded that those who had been arrested be returned to their former state. And on July 1 it issued an order deporting Ryang Du Won and two labour controllers who were involved in the incident. Further, it sent the director of a bureau at the Foreign Ministry to Seoul and threatened that it would suspend its economic aid to south Korea of 70 million marks and was ready even to sever diplomatic relations.

The Park regime used a variety of tortures to obtain false confessions from the intellectuals whom they had kidnapped and brought them to trial to sentence them to death or pass guilty verdicts on them. However, faced with the stiff and unbending attitude of the West German government, it was obliged to hold negotiations and return them all to West Germany, though the matter dragged on for a while.

In the situation that the relations between the two countries were aggravated in this way, the West German government adopted a strange attitude towards me. Brandt, who knew me personally, was Deputy Prime Minister and concurrently Foreign Minister, but he did not even receive me when I called on him to give him an address prior to my return home after four years' stay as ambassador, and he did not confer on me a decoration which was a courtesy afforded those who had resided there for more than two years.

Prior to my departure from Bonn I delivered a speech to the Foreign Ministry of West Germany expressing my regret for the East

Berlin kidnapping incident and I left for Seoul on August 16, 1967.

On my way home I thought to myself that after being put to shame at the South Korean–Japanese Foreign Ministers’ Talks I had chosen the office of ambassador to West Germany because I was disgusted with the pro-Japanese swines, but I had almost been expelled from West Germany because of the East Berlin incident. Must one who has national conscience wander about like this under the south Korean government? Or is it because I am ill-fated? Although I had abandoned government office voluntarily and was returning home seeking holy orders, I felt sad at heart.

However, as a saying goes, “Right will prevail in the end,” and later it was proved in many ways that I was not responsible for the East Berlin incident.

Three months after the incident, when I was in Seoul, the West German ambassador to south Korea called on me and awarded me a decoration, in accordance with instructions he had received from his home country. In addition, I was later told by Kim Yong Sun, who had formerly been KCIA director, that when Yun I Sang was taken to Seoul and put into a cell, he had dashed his head against the wall and wrote with the blood running from it, “Choe Dok Sin had no part in the East Berlin incident.”

It seemed to me that any misunderstanding concerning me had been corrected, so I felt somewhat relieved. But other thoughts made my heart ache.

Even while undergoing frightful tortures in prison, Yun I Sang had defended me by writing in blood at the risk of his life in order to do his duty to me. But what did I do for their personal security while sitting idly at ease outside? Although I did not know from the beginning that the KCIA intended to arrest many of our compatriots such as Yun I Sang I did learn of it later.

The fact that I left them alone to be arrested was tantamount to having assisted the KCIA in capturing them. Strictly speaking, it must be said that I conspired and moved together with KCIA.

My heart ached when I thought in this way.

I felt that I had committed an unforgivable crime against the victims of the incident, nay, against our nation.

Meanwhile, in 1978, Yun I Sang sponsored a conference for

promoting democracy in south Korea and invited me to it. So I took the chance to make a public apology in my speech. This was really a good opportunity.

In addition, Kim Hyong Uk who had acted as the top wirepuller during the East Berlin incident as the KCIA director wrote in his book “Power and Plot” in 1980 that Ryang Du Won had informed him, “I carried out the kidnappings without telling Ambassador Choe Dok Sin about it,” and “...Choe Dok Sin feared that the operations would cause an international incident and refused to cooperate with us in carrying them out,” and he gave instructions, “His fear is quite natural, but there is no choice. Go ahead with the plan.”

Lastly I want to add a few words about the reason why the Park regime committed such unlawful kidnappings. This incident ruined my ambition to befriend distant states and antagonize our neighbours. Moreover, although everyone may make his own guess, I think that with the irregularities connected with the election to the 7th National Assembly which was held in May 1967 by the Park regime being disclosed and bitter complaints being heard against them, the regime contrived the kidnapping incident in order to divert the people’s attention and consolidate its hold on power.

It can be said that even in those days Kim Hyong Uk was “loyalist” to Park Jung Hee and a devoted servant of the US CIA. Kim Hyong Uk grasped the inner intentions of Park Jung Hee and the United States and acted on them.

He could not have acted alone.



# A Dream of the Blessed Land OBJ



*Workers and youth and students in south Korea up in an anti-government struggle*



In the spring of 1967 I resigned the government office I had held for over ten years and became the patriarch of the Chondoist faith.

I was brought up under the influence of Tonghak idea of my parents from my childhood when I was called Chon Dok.

While in the military and government service for a long time, however, I was not faithful to this idea. I did neither “remove violence and deliver the people” nor “repulse and annihilate the Westerners and Japanese,” and, on the contrary, played a part in making people groan under tyranny and the Westerners and Japanese running rampant in the country.

So, always feeling heartache, I wondered how I could find a road to dedicate the rest of my life for the people and the nation. In these conditions, I entered the religion partly of my own accord, in consideration of the request of the elder influential believers of Chondoism. In other words, I intended to change my course of life to go back to the starting-point as a Tonghak descendant and realize, though belatedly, a dream of the blessed land.

Therefore, I had heart and soul in reviving the religious influence by relieving the people on a large scale and building up the nation and making for the welfare of the people and, through it, making contribution to the national restoration. Although there were many turns and twists in this course, there was a little progress as a result of the missionary work I did, bearing in mind the Chondoist doctrine that a “high moral character of a saint gives birth to a man of virtue while a selfishness of an ordinary man an evil man.”

Entering the 1970s, however, I was involved in the presidential election campaign and the dawn of reunification which was ushered in by the North-South Joint Statement vanished again due to the whirlwind of the Yushin. In this situation the religious influence which seemed to be enlarged ceased to extend further.

This is how the blessed land came to remain my mere dream.

## Inauguration of Religious Patriarch

### *Is It Heaven's Decree?*

As aforesaid, early in 1967 when Lubke, President of West

Germany, paid a visit to south Korea, I came back to Seoul to receive him and his party as the south Korean ambassador to Bonn. One day early in March I met the elder influential believers of Chondoism at the Sejong Hotel.

Among them was 70-year-old Chu Ok Gyong, widow of Son Byong Hui.

After greetings were exchanged between us the religious situation was brought into conversation. After Patriarch Sin Yong Gu died at 82 toward the end of 1966, the office remained vacant, they said.

They said that while making a provincial tour to see how things stood with the devotees, they selected two suitable persons in Ryongnam region but, if they elected them it would apparently bring out sects in Chondoism because they were all disciples of Sin Yong Gu.

On behalf of the leading elders, Chu said:

“Under such circumstance, we reached agreement that it would be suitable to invite Mr. Choe Dok Sin to be patriarch.

“So, on behalf of our Chondoism we’ve come to ask your opinion today.”

I guessed that they nominated me as a candidate for patriarch because my father had ever been Chairman of the Religious Council in 1920s and, in the conditions where contact with the authorities was needed to regain the declining religious influence, they thought as I was in the government office for long I could be in touch with the Park’s regime.

I could not but reply to their question, regardless of what they thought. So I expressed straightforwardly my opinion.

“I thank all of you, leading elders, for trusting me so much. As you know well, our families were Chondoists through three generations. But, as for me, I’ve never been in orders, nor am I familiar with the doctrine, nor resourceful enough to diffuse virtues. What is worse, I have been profaned with long government service, so I think I am not qualified to assume the sacred office of the church.

Mrs. Chu resumed:

“You say you have never had access to doctrine, mission and orders. But it does not matter if we help you, doesn’t it? Rather, for our financial straits we shall be unable to treat you as much as you receive while in government service...”

“Well, if so, such a thing as treatment is of no consideration. I don’t regret giving up the government post at all. All that makes myself uneasy is that I have no qualifications for mission.”

“Then, all right. We believe you have accepted.”

“Thank you. You trust my unworthy self so much, so I will work as best I can.”

In this way I and the leading elders have reached an agreement primarily.

In those days I felt a repugnance somewhat toward official position. I thought that once I had brought into reality even the mutual visits of President Lubke and Park Jung Hee after being demoted from the post of minister to ambassador to West Germany there was no need for me to stay there any longer. And I had a mind to reside as ambassador in Switzerland or Austria which have scenic attractions and do the sights of Europe to my heart’s content for a few years more before opportunely retiring from the official world. In this mental conditions, I readily accepted the office of patriarch in order to make it a turning point of my life.

But I recalled to my mind what Kong Jin Hang who had once been the patriarch tipped me off a few days before that there is a factional strife in the church, so I said in addition that I would not assume the office of patriarch unless I was elected by absolute majority in the coming election of patriarch on account of the appearance of opponents.

Later, the poll was taken in the Extraordinary National Congress of Representatives of Chondoism with me as an applicant for the position of patriarch and 107 votes out of 112 were polled for me and the remainder was scattered.

Regarding it as “Heaven’s decree,” I was decided to take the post of patriarch in due form. At the same time, I as a descendant of Tonghak made up my mind to devote myself for the reviving Chondoism and building an “earthly paradise” of the blessed land, the supreme object and ideal of Chondoism, by saving the people on

a wide scale and guaranteeing national security and public peace. I thought this was a way I should follow to obey “Heaven’s decree.”

This thought brought somehow before my mind’s eye the image of my father who had gone over to the north at the time of the June 25 war. This was probably ascribed to my feeling remorse for the fact that, although my father imparted me the Tonghak idea from my childhood, I had so far only kept it even once, wandered about and did not adhere to it at all.

Therefore, I prayed that, though I was far away from him, he would take good care of this undutiful son so that I could successfully carry on the great cause of building the blessed land and relieving the people.

### *For the Restoration of Chondoism*

After I was elected the patriarch, I called on Park Jung Hee and tendered my intention of resigning as ambassador. His first word to me was, “Good. Things have gone well with you.”

I felt I did well to resign voluntarily before being dismissed.

I told him that I would go to West Germany again to settle the remaining business, and retired.

Later, I went to Bonn and unexpectedly the East Berlin incident happened as mentioned above. So, I returned home after four months’ delay.

Consequently, what I planned at the first to begin my missionary life in renewed frame was frustrated. I spent with a very heavy heart the first day after returning home and next day I went to the general headquarters of Chondoism in Kyongun-dong.

Kim Gyong Tae, the head of religious affairs office, who acted in place of patriarch during my absence received me cheerfully, calling me Tok Am. At that moment, I came to renew the realization of my duty, thinking that I had really started the missionary life.

The actual missionary situation about which he told me was deplorable.

First of all, finance was in great straits.

The income from the donated rice was negligible and the memorial house of 100th anniversary of birth of Taesinsa (Choe Je U, founder of Chondoism—Tr.) rented for cinema house at 180,000 *won* a month was the only resource of income.

The donated rice means the rice donated by the believers for the revival of the church. This system was initiated at the time of Uiamsinsa (one of the heads of Chondoism). At that time, its quantity was so great that the finance of the church entirely depended on it. But, after the August 15, it gradually decreased and now it has been brought nearly to naught.

In addition, the 180,000 *won* was devoted to the missionary work and salary for over ten clergymen.

In view of the fact that when I was an ambassador, I drew a monthly salary of over 400,000 *won* I could imagine their living standard.

However, I did not repent even a bit. On the contrary, I wanted to be proud of it.

Not only finance but the management of church, the expansion of its influence and all other things were in unfavourable conditions.

I gave it a thought that if Taesinsa who said he would “build up the blessed land” and “relieve the people on a wide scale” and Haewolsinsa (Choe Si Hyong, one of the heads of Chondoism—Tr.) who upheld the banner of “national security and public peace” existed, how they would view it.

Chondoism advocated the people’s right to live when it came into being in this world. So its supreme goal and ideal is to build a “paradise on earth.” This means to build a world in which the people can lead their life free from worries like “men in the heaven.”

As it came out to defend the rights and interests of a large majority of the people like this, Chondoism won their support and maintained its existence, even subjected to so terrible suppression in the days of Japanese imperialism.

It seemed to me that the shoutings of Tonghak which had risen in Kobu, South Cholla Province and shaken the whole country in 1894 came into hearing. Where have the idea and great ambition of

these days gone and how are we in this pitiable plight today?

I came to realize more clearly why the leading elders wanted to entrust me with an important duty of patriarch.

I thought if I wanted to restore Chondoism, I should become a patriarch who served the people and, to do this I should build up, first of all, the ranks of Chondoists, and, in addition, settle the financial problem.

So according to my view that here the training of those who would succeed to the church precede other things, I formed the “New Men’s Federation” in 1968 with those who were interested in Tonghak and myself became its president, and published the organ Siningan. At the same time, I saw to it that each parish selected young people from among those who would attend Sunday services to strengthen “The Young Chondoists Association” and “The Juvenile Chondoists Association” under it. In addition, I strengthened the religious institute to become the churchmen’s training centre both in name and reality in order to bring up young clergymen. I have something to mention here. Once I witnessed that at the time of release of the “prisoners of war against communism” those who had in their hands the flags of Kungul (the flag of Chondoism) together with Taegukgi (south Korean national flag) and the flag of South Korean Young Men’s Association came out at the head of columns. And I believed that they would visit our general headquarters of Chondoism when they entered Seoul.

After I became patriarch this came back into my mind and I asked about it to know that they actually did so. As for them, they were the members of the Chondoist Chongu Party when they were in the north. On coming over to the south, they called at the headquarters of Chondoism but were denied. So they joined the “Anti-communist Young Men’s Association” and then transferred to “The Young Men’s Christian Association.”

I was told that the headquarters of Chondoism in which those who had come over to the south from the north held a great majority at that time did not receive them at all on the ground they had served the Korean People’s Army and so they might be spies from the north.

Feeling all the more keenly the tragedy of national division, I

thought I should disseminate the Tonghak idea on a wider scale also for the prosperity of the nation. So, I erected the “Memorial Tower of Tonghak Revolutionary Army” in Kongju, and then worked out a plan to build a large 15-storeyed hall of Chondoism, Suun Hall, in Kyongun-dong in 1969.

At this news, Chong In Guk, professor of the architectural department of Hongik University, made designs for the hall of his own accord. Although I was greatly encouraged by this, I wasted time for about a year flustered, unable to settle the financial problem.

Around this time, my intimate friend urged me to start construction, saying that a certain Li, big businessman built a high building in front of the Pando Hotel with the living-in fees he got in advance and that it was desirable to start the work immediately and see.

So, I was hesitatingly thinking of getting over the financial difficulties in this way, when I was informed that Park Jung Hee was interested in Chondoism as a descendant of Tonghak. One day in mid-January 1971, I called on him at his residence to lodge my petition to him at least thinking that I would lose nothing by it.

At that time the political and financial circles were very strained on the eve of the 7th presidential election. Park Jung Hee, however, so readily complied with my request for the government assistance that it was unexpected. “Certainly, I should assist. I’ll tell the chief of secretariat.”

“Chondoist faith is nation’s religion, isn’t it? It is proper that we should help you. As for me alone, I have close relations with Tonghak from the previous generation.”

I knew later that Park Song Bin, father of Park Jung Hee, was a renegade of Tonghak and traitor to the nation. When he had been arrested in connection with Tonghak, he informed against his colleagues to suffer severe penalties and after he was set free, in compensation for this he was appointed the magistrate of Nyongwol County. However, as I had not inside knowledge of this at that time, I thought he was greatly concerned about flourishing Chondoism.

In addition a few days later, Li Hu Rak, chief of secretariat of the Blue House (presidential residence), summoned Li Yang Gu, who

had contracted for the building of the hall and me, and said, "President Park told me to help you." With this he observed that he would arrange to have a bank loan you within the limits of two hundred million *won* and, besides, he would use his good offices so that I could get the foreign loan of 500,000 dollars. He added that he would instruct Seoul city office to pay in advance the compensation for the building site of the Chondoist hall which belonged to the area where a new street was to be laid down.

I could not but be greatly excited.

After that the building of the hall made steady progress and was brought to completion next year.

However, I had no thought that at the time of presidential election in April that year he would make me take the stump using it as bait.

### *An Operation of Appointing Election Day*

I would like to briefly touch on how the presidential election day came to be fixed that year before giving details of my being compelled to take the stump.

In general, under republicanism which is said to be based on liberal democracy, both the government and nongovernment parties of all countries are very nervous about the season and day when presidential or Diet election is held.

In this connection, they say this is because they aim to make the people, the sovereign, take part in the election as many as possible and so let the popular will be correctly reflected.

Of course, it is right. However, I should say it is not wrong to say that behind this argument there is a design with which they compete with each other in election.

Because the season and day election is held, in other words, whether it is held in the farming season or the leisure season, for farmers, whether on Sunday or on weekdays, affects the scale of participants in election in case of some sections of the people and, according to this the seizure of power of the political parties might be decided. In particular, this is conspicuous in case of the direct presidential election.



Viewed in this light, it cannot be denied that the polling season and day or appointing the day itself has strategically a great importance.

It affords an instance of this that at the time of the fourth presidential election in 1960 in south Korea, the Liberal Party government fixed the polling day for May 15 at first but suddenly announced it was moved up to March 15. They said in excuse that May was farming season and so farming electors' advantage should be considered, but there is no need to say that it was aimed to shorten the period of election campaign of the Democratic Party to the minimum.

It was motivated also by an intention to manage the election in this way, to the advantage of the government party and to the disadvantage of the opposition parties to even a bit more greater extent that the successive governments revised the election law whenever the election was held in south Korea.

This can be, more or less, seen in all the countries based on the liberal democratic system.

But there was a quite strange thing which was connected with the question of fixing election day. It was associated with how the day of 7th presidential election was fixed for April 27 in 1971 in south Korea.

At that time the election law stipulated that the presidential election day should be fixed during the period between 70 and 40 days before the date of termination of presidential office and the President publicly announce it 35 days before the election. So, as the presidential term of office was to be terminated on June 30 that year, any day between April 21 and May 20 could be the election day.

However, because a long preparatory period of the election would favour after all the nongovernment parties, the Republican Party took the stand that it would choose the earliest possible day among the legal days. So it fixed the election day after examining its stand toward the nongovernment parties historically and many-sidedly. This reminded one of an operation of appointing election day. At first, those at working-level drafted a plan of election being held on April 21.

They chose this legally earliest day because it was adequate to the purpose of the early election and the numerals of April 21 totalled “lucky seven.” However, the party cadres did not accept this plan on the ground that if they fixed the earliest election date, the nongovernment parties might denounce it as a manoeuvre not to make them get time and, in addition, the day was too near to the anniversary of “April 19” student uprising.

So the planning and investigation department of the Republican Party tried and discriminated lucky and unlucky days between April 23 after the 22nd, Sunday and May 1.

The 25th was the day when the professors’ demonstration was held in connection with the April 19 Uprising, the 26th the day when President Syngman Rhee retired, the 28th the day when Li Gi Bung and his family committed suicide, the 29th the Japanese Emperor’s birthday, and May 1, the labour day of communists. So they should be all avoided. The remaining days were the 23rd, 24th, 27th and 30th. An official got so nervous that he asked a diviner to get an answer that the 30th was inadequate to all things, so it was excluded, they said.

Further, the 23rd was counted out on the ground that it was near to the earliest day for the election, then the 24th and 27th remained in the end. It was required to make a choice between the two, and 27th was adopted first because it included the numeral 7 of the seventh presidential election and secondly because seven added to two made nine (the highest points in the card playing—Tr.).

It is really sidesplitting. Now that the officials of the planning and investigation department of the party in power were thinking of things in this way, what lot would fall on it?

The above stated fact is what I heard firsthand from R, who served the planning and investigation department of the Republican Party at that time.

### *“Repay Trust”*

Apart from how the polling day came to be appointed, when it was fixed for April 27, government and nongovernment parties set out all at once on a speaking tour from March 27 because the election law admitted making it from 30 days before the election.

The competition between the government and opposition parties grew apparently fiercer every hour.

One day K who served in the presidential secretariat of the Republican Party called on me unannounced.

“Dear Patriarch, I’ve come on President Park’s instruction.”

Since I had once asked for help for the Church in financial distress, I believed he had brought some glad news in connection with it, but much to my surprise he said:

“His Excellency President said he wanted your help in the coming election.”

“What can I do for him?”

“He wishes you to go on the stump.”

“Go on the stump?”

“Yes, sir. His Excellency President asks because he trusts you, I suppose, so you should repay his trust, shouldn’t you?”

He seemed to partly appease and partly threaten me. As is known, in those days, Kim Dae Jung was a political rival of Park Jung Hee in the election. The former had been nominated for the presidency in the inaugural meeting of the New Democratic Party held in September 1970, the previous year, by fishing in troubled waters in the conditions where the opposition was aroused to Ryu Jin San’s despotism within the party.

On being nominated for a candidate of the presidency from the New Democratic Party, Kim Dae Jung declared at the first press interview that in south Korea 1970s was the period of the masses full of hope while 1950s was the period of darkness and 1960s the period of the dictatorship pretexting development. Further he called forth a thrilling response by saying if he would be elected president he would break down the barrier between the north and the south and explore the possibilities of reunification through the exchange of correspondence and journalists and other nonpolitical contacts in the field of sports.

Park Jung Hee must have regarded Kim Dae Jung as his formidable “rival.” Ushering in 1971, he took every possible measure for the election; he revived the province and city branches of the Republican Party which had been abrogated two years before

and changed the party organizational system into the system for election and appointed Li Hu Rak, the former south Korean ambassador to Japan, the KCIA director to make him the general commander of election.

In addition, as the election day drew near, he seemed to lay stress on putting down the practices of “caring for village and disregarding town,” he gave a 56-point political pledge running into ten fields, whereas he had given a 100-point campaign pledge in the election in 1967.

The Republican Party also did their best to form the teams of oratorical campaign. Park Jung Hee himself made every possible effort, running about nine cities including Taejon, Chongju, Chonju, Suwon, Pusan, Chunchon, Taegu and Seoul. And there were leading teams, such as Chungchong and Honam provincial team led by Kim Jong Pil, Kyongsang provincial team led by Paek Nam Ok, Kyonggi and Kangwon provincial team led by Li Hyo Sang. Besides, there were province, city and district party teams.

Needless to say, the New Democratic Party took up a challenge. In particular, Kim Dae Jung called at three or four places a day to have a “talk with voters,” and tried to implant his image, scattering all over the country his photos inscribed with the autograph letters “Together with you.”

In this way the government and nongovernment parties came to be pitted against each other to the utmost but the tide of public opinion had seemingly turned in favour of Kim Dae Jung.

To take people gathered at the oratorical place as an instance he commanded an overwhelming majority and was surpassing considered from the standard of their qualifications.

Park Jung Hee had at his side those most of whom were forcibly brought together by government officials and heads of tong and neighbourhood units, while the attendance sided with Kim Dae Jung were those who gathered of their own accord despite many destructive manoeuvrings of the authorities.

April 15 when Kim Dae Jung made a campaign speech in Changchundan Park was Sunday. But the staff of some government offices were compelled to do duty as usual and employees of banks, state-running enterprises or private enterprises which could not but

be under the control of the government were mostly made to hold picnic party or fishing contest to restrain them from going to the oratorical place. The park was, however, overcrowded with as many audience as over 300,000 of which the press reported that it was "largest attendance at the stump since the establishment of the government."

Opposition leaders Sin Ik Hui and Cho Byong Ok acquired great popularity in the past, but they were not comparable to Kim Dae Jung.

So the Republican Party side was embarrassed and intended to draw into the oratorical campaign all the personalities they could make any contact with.

It was under these circumstances that the Republican Party's presidential secretariat sent me an official to ask me to take a stump.

So I was confused in mind.

It was obvious that if I refused his request, our church could not receive assistance from the authorities. Secretary K also hinted it to no small extent. Nevertheless, I could not praise a specified person alone as was told to. Because it meant the renunciation of ecclesiastical standpoint. I was at a loss, and could not but be irresolute at a crossroad.

It was a fact that building the Suun Hall I had assistance from the government. According to them, this assistance was an expression of their "trust."

I am planning to make the church have an educational institution for the national education in the future, so it will be no good for me to oppose the government. I should continue to win "its confidence." It is also necessary for realizing the dream of the blessed land. I must not do such a thing as to refuse the request for taking a stump only to lose the confidence.

Thinking like this I was determined to set out on a speaking tour for the sake of Park Jung Hee in order to "reward" their "trust," nay, to win ever more "confidence" of them.

## The Road to Reunification Lighted and

## Darkened

### *A Mishap Happened to the Republican Party*

I started out for campaign speech and found that the government and nongovernment parties were waging the awfully fierce offensive and defensive campaign.

Although it was not an unexpected thing of course, the general situation impressed me that the New Democratic Party assumed the offensive full of vigour though this was so because it was the opposition, and in contrast to this, the Republican Party stood on the defensive.

To take the question of long-term office which was hotly debated in those days as an instance, Park Jung Hee entreated to put confidence in him only once again “because this was the last term for him to stand as a candidate,” and the Republican Party tried to justify his third term office with the questions of national security, effective command of army, laying the foundation of reunification through the uninterrupted economic construction and the like.

Such a man as Paek Nam Ok spoke that Park Jung Hee’s being in office for ten years was not a long-term office and that for the continuous prosperity of the economy and the political stability “the President Park should be elected for the third time.”

Contrary to this, Kim Dae Jung stated that “if a man stays long in power, a democratic country will be corrupted however skilful he may be in administering the state affairs, as running water spoils when it stays.” Further he stressed that “unless the government is not replaced this time, the system of Führer will be established to produce permanent office and, besides, election itself be gone in the future.”

In the economic question the New Democratic Party turned its attack mainly against foreign loan.

In his campaign speech Kim Dae Jung said that “for a large foreign loan each of the people who did not owe even merely a thousand *won* at the time of May 16 is now saddled with 30,000 *won* debt, and that Chile in the south American continent and south Korea were the largest debtors in the world.” He attacked the

Republican Party government, setting the audience to laughing with the word that “in these days, at birth a baby cries not ‘ungah’ but 30,000 *won*, they say.”

Refuting this, Kim Jong Pil said, “It’s a fine thing for an individual or a country to borrow money from others and use it properly. As for me, I want to get a loan as much as ten billion dollars and use them for the economic construction. If our country is unable to pay it back, foreign countries will not lend them to us, will they?”

However, this was none other than a grumbling of the attacked.

In particular, Kim Dae Jung blamed Park Jung Hee for his election campaign foreboding national ruin through which he excited provincialism saying, “If I’m elected President, I’ll put an end to the dictatorship, privileged economy and corruption and become not the President representing a locality but the President of the entire people who holds dear freedom, the economy for the people and justice,” and “How can we distinguish between Kyongsang and Cholla Province in this country which is smaller than the forehead of a grasshopper?” This had a great appeal to the people and brought about a sort of “boom” of the New Democratic Party.

In addition, these were a showdown between the Republican Party and the New Democratic Party in the election campaign mainly over the system of the local reserve forces and the “proposal on guarantee by four great powers.”

Opposing the Republican Party which insisted on the need to strengthen the reserve force that can match “the Worker-Peasant Red Guard” in order to check the southward invasion from the north, the New Democratic Party stated that it would dissolve it.

Kim Dae Jung retorted that they say “if there is no reserve force, the north will attack us right away,” and if it is true, they should have already been attacked in the past when it did not exist, shouldn’t they?”

Because if the ordinary people were enlisted in the reserve force they could not engage freely in trade and were apt to excite the dissatisfaction of the employers they sided with the New Democratic Party. In these conditions the Republican Party could

not bring forth any particular counterargument and the Ministry of National Defence simply declared that the proposal of abolition of the reserve force was a traitorous proposal which might instigate the reservists to plunge their organization and management into confusion and bring about southward invasion from the north.

“The proposal on guarantee by four great powers” was put forward by Kim Dae Jung and its substance was that in order to relieve the tension of the Korean peninsula we should require the United States, Japan, China and the Soviet Union to prevent a war in the Korean peninsula and ensure reunification and independence of Korea jointly.

In my campaign speech I criticized him mainly on this point.

It is absurd to say that one can remove the tension of the Korean peninsula and defend the sovereignty of the country through guarantee of four great powers. The Korean peninsula has become the arena of competition of the great powers historically because of the importance of its geographical situation.

The history of fall of the Li dynasty shows that one should not try to settle the question of his own country by relying on foreign forces. The outside force is by no means an angel. It is not a philanthropist either, who takes care of others at the sacrifice of its own interests. We should know that if any country renders assistance to south Korea, it was motivated also by the consideration for its own interests.

The interests of foreign forces mean that south Korea remains in the sphere of their influence.

So, if Korea is reunified under the guarantee of four great powers, Korea will be obliged to always probe their motives and ministers will not manage the state affairs from one common position but be divided into four groups, looking up at different countries. Then how can we achieve national reunification?

This is the outline of my argument, but it is a fact that it was beneficial to Park Jung Hee after all.

It was aimed to justify myself for my having become a speaker of the Republican Party and it could neither inflame the people's desire for reunification nor make contribution to the welfare of the order.



In fact, he helped me in the building of Suun Hall and then took me out to the oratorical campaign. I believed that if I canvassed at his request, it would be favourable for receiving assistance in building Suun University in the future.

Therefore, when he was elected, I called at the Blue House (Presidential residence) many times, but every time Park Jung Hee did not meet me. I was chagrined and sent him a letter, but there was no response at all.

One day Secretary C of the Blue House, my acquaintance, told me that seeing my letter Park said with a straight face, "Well, I have already aided him very much..."

This word of his clearly showed that he regarded all the state property as his own.

Through it I was able to guess correctly his attitude towards the Chondoist faith, nay, towards me.

This is because I was aware of the two methods Park Jung Hee had applied in treating persons whom he was interested in.

As a power holder, Park Jung Hee gave his favourite persons high positions or cash. There is no need to explain about giving high positions. To give cash means that he sets in his office a cabinet which is full of dollar, pound, yen and other foreign currency or newly printed south Korean notes and gives an adequate amount of them to those whom he thought to be needed for him, as a "token of his gratitude." I, too, had ever received his present and heard that he offered it to others.

As a result, although I stated that I went on a stumping tour for the order and expansion of religious influence, I danced, after all, to the tune of Park Jung Hee who was opposed to the reunification by taking a stand against the "proposal on guarantee by four great powers" put forward by Kim Dae Jung.

### *North-South Joint Statement and My Feeling*

In connection with the reunification question I must say the feelings I experienced when I heard of the North-South Joint Statement.

As it is still fresh in my memory, on the night of the 3rd of July,

1972, there was a TV forecast that there would be an important announcement and press interview of KCIA director Li Hu Rak at 10 a.m., next day.

So far, the President made an important announcement occasionally, but I had heard for the first time about the KCIA director's important announcement. I was rather nervous. I confined myself in the room of patriarch from the morning of the 4th, and turned in by using a dial at two or three minutes to ten. The North-South Joint Statement was issued. It came as a surprise to me and I listened carefully.

In its first section the statement stressed that, first, reunification should be achieved independently, without reliance upon outside forces, secondly, reunification be achieved by peaceful means, without recourse to the use of arms and thirdly, great national unity be promoted, transcending the differences of ideology, ideal and social system.

The joint statement also proposed that the north and the south should refrain from slandering and calumniating the other side, prevent actively unexpected military conflicts and realize many-sided material interchange and travel between the north and the south.

In addition, the statement proposed installing permanent direct telephone links between Pyongyang and Seoul to deal with directly, promptly and accurately the questions arising between the north and the south and forming a North-South Coordination Commission for the purpose of settling the question of country's reunification based on the agreed-on principle of national reunification.

It was a satisfactory statement I had heard for the first time after 27 years of country's division. It was a morning light thrown over the dark road to reunification.

I thought it fully reflected the hope of our Korean people. Because the joint statement demonstrated to the world that we are an excellent civilized people capable of self-governing and a peace-loving people, not a warlike one, I believed none of the 50 million people would oppose it.

On the other hand, I felt warm inside at the thought that a new chapter was going to form in the history of our nation. Because

through the joint statement which was published in the conditions that our people suffered a terrible tragedy of fratricidal war such as the June 25 war after they were partitioned by outside forces and the north and the south thought they could not exist together under the canopy of heaven and were hostile to one another regarding the other as an inhuman group with which it could not have dialogue, each of them came not only to understand the other's existence and position but also recognize that the other was also the community of the same blood and could be the object of dialogue.

But, I was, as some others, not bubbling over with excitement with the thought that once the joint statement was published the door of reunification of the north and the south would soon be opened.

This is not because I was especially self-possessed or cool-hearted but because it seemed to me that firstly, the joint statement took into account the internal and external situation in which the Soviet-American detente was brought into reality on the basis of "the principle of coexistence" and the north and the south was unable to reunify the country by force of arms internally and, secondly, since dialogue represented a political device by nature and it was a contention of shrewdness against shrewdness, there was no need to be surprised at it.

There was one more thing which probably acted on my feelings more strongly. The doubt whether such a man as Park Jung Hee could be true to the engagement, dissatisfaction or other subtle feelings were at the bottom of my heart.

In fact, while serving as Foreign Minister and ambassador to West Germany under the Park regime I felt that he surpassed in political ruse the south Korean professional politicians who resorted to trickery in doing everything.

From the outset of the May 16 coup d'état, he never thought to return to his former position and was determined to take part in military administration or civil administration subsequent to it, but ostensibly made a fuss talking of "transfer of power to civil administration" and "February 18 declaration." And he made the "February 27 oath" on purpose.

The reversing of his decision which was noised about early in

1963 represented his grand tactics aimed to bewilder the nongovernment party and people, lulling the conflict within the so-called autonomous force.

When he announced that he would not take part in civil administration some people welcomed it and pushed forward the organization of such an absurd party as Pan-National Party, but in vain.

He was also crafty in employing persons. I think that as Syngman Rhee made Kim Chang Ryong and Won Yong Dok have loyalty competition between them in opposing communism, so Park Jung Hee kept the seat of power by making Kim Jong Pil, Li Hu Rak and Kim Hyong Uk carry out loyalty competition among them.

Such Park Jung Hee made public the joint statement with the north.

I guessed that he proceeded from the principle that he could join hands with the north and any people who opposed foreign forces for the peaceful reunification of the country, but I could not but doubt whether this unfaithful man could be true to the statement.

Therefore, although I fully understood the importance of the joint statement, I did not feel like enthusiastically welcoming it with shout of joy.

### *Is Politics a Magic?*

I heard with great satisfaction the North-South Joint Statement, but I was apprehensive that the north and the south that proudly published the joint statement through mutual agreement might unexpectedly take issue with each other making analysis and conjecture in their respective way in connection with the expressions contained in it.

This is because when I was in that government service for some time I knew that even in the case both sides got together and had negotiations they came to wrangle with each other in the end because of discordance between their words and inner thoughts.

For this reason, some people say that modern politics is like a magic.

But my apprehension was not baseless. It was clearly shown in

the press interview Li Hu Rak had following announcement of the North–South Joint Statement.

In the session of the National Assembly which lasted for eight days from July 5, the day after the joint statement was issued, the interpellation was made and the case was the same there.

It was most graphically shown, among others, in the interpretation of outside force. Here the point was whether UN was foreign force or not.

In his reply to the question raised by a journalist, Li Hu Rak who had been to Pyongyang, said that UN was not outside force.

When asked in the National Assembly by its members, Prime Minister Kim Jong Pil also replied, “UN which is a universal organization is not outside force.” A newspaper reported that Yu Jin O, the ex-president of the New Democratic Party, stated at a discussion meeting that UN was not outside force “because it is an organ to maintain world peace.”

But around this time, an important person of the north announced in the form of an informal talk in Pyongyang that UN should get out, for it was outside force.

In my opinion outside force literally means external force. I think that irrespective of an individual country, an international organ or others belonging to it, if it is a force not within but without the nation, it is none other than an outside force.

Whether it is national or supernational cannot be a yardstick for discriminating outside forces. I think that one should start from a nation, to be more exact, “oneself,” and if it is without “oneself” or without the nation, it should be qualified by a word of “outside.”

This is proved by the Charter of the United Nations itself, I think. It defines the right of self-determination of peoples as a sacred right of all nations. This means that the UN would guarantee it for them. From this, it is self-evident that the UN represents an outside force in relation to all nations.

Most of those in south Korea who claim that the UN is not an outside force intend to insist that the American troops stationed there are not an outside force. They say that the American troops should be present there permanently because they are under the name of the UN forces.

But, in reality, all of the troops stationed in south Korea under the name of UN forces are the American troops. In other words, they are the US 8th Army. They are stationed in south Korea to defend the interests of the United States and assume the name of the UN forces for the sake of appearance.

Nevertheless, because I had not any definite opinion on outside force in those days I was simply worried inwardly, seeing that public opinion was agitated.

Besides, there were many arguments on the expressions in the joint statement.

The statement stressing to achieve great national unity, transcending the differences in ideology, ideal and social system, for instance, what is meant substantially by transcending? Might not the structure of social consciousness be changed by the north-south dialogue? If so, shouldn't the anti-communist system and Anti-Communist and National Security Laws be revised?

I do not want and regard it necessary to make clear my views on these questions here.

But I would like to say that the stand and view the authorities took in connection with these questions after they agreed on and signed the joint statement was a question. In other words, since they agreed with the north and made public the joint statement, they should lead the people properly, based on the spirit of the joint statement, but, on the contrary, they assumed the position with which they poured cold water over the people who supported the statement and longed for reunification.

To be concrete, they made indiscreet remarks without hesitation that "People must not expect too much of the North-South Joint Statement," "A dialogue is a mere method of groping for peace, but not all," and "There has so far been a confrontation without dialogue but from now there will be a confrontation with dialogue."

On the platform of National Assembly Kim Jong Pil replied: "The announcement of the North-South Joint Statement will not bring about any change in the existing system of value and it is not right to go in for hasty sentimental discussions on reunification and a reckless proposal of reunification."

I took these remarks of the authorities as they meant, in a word,

that the North–South Joint Statement was not reliable so they could not be responsible for its faithful fulfilment, and everything was what it had used to be.

This clearly showed that the south Korean authorities used double-dealing tactics, regarding politics as a magic. I could not but think that although Park Jung Hee agreed to issue the joint statement, he was devising another stratagem immediately.

### *The Whirlwind of Revitalization*

As I had expected, on October 17, 1972, Park Jung Hee proclaimed emergency martial law and made a “special declaration.” According to this, the National Assembly was dissolved right away and the activities of political parties were prohibited. It was reported that the press should be submitted for censorship in advance and universities and colleges were closed.

I was not so surprised because I had been observing them with suspicion. But my suspicion of their duplicity could not be dispelled by the special declaration alone.

This was because stressing the importance of emergency measure the authorities said that it was not merely for the sake of the government but represented a great work to make rapid progress of the nation by defending sovereign rights and achieving glorious reunification and prosperity of the 50 million people, and on October 22 announced in the form of an informal talk that “I am determined to dedicate myself to the revitalization reform in the future under the unreserved support of the people.”

This remarks amounted to saying that they would devote themselves to the revitalization reform “to achieve national reunification and prosperity.” But, I could not understand that if so, why, after the publication of the joint statement, they oppressed the people who would rise up in the struggle for national reunification and prosperity and proclaimed emergency martial law in the end.

I could guess in my own way their schemes only when new constitution bill which had been voted on at the emergency Cabinet meeting was made public on October 27.

Because the bill was aimed at concentration of power.

In other words, while the old constitution provided that the President was the head of the Administration and represented the state in the foreign relations, the new constitution stipulated that the President not only acted as the head of the Administration, but also could control legislative and judicial powers and regulate all state powers.

That is to say, the President played the role of Chairman of the Autonomous National Congress for Unification which as the power organ of the people, finalized a bill for amending constitution that was passed at the National Assembly and elected the President and could recommend en bloc candidates for the National Assembly that accounted for one third of the full numbers. At the same time the President could exercise state emergency power and the rights to put an important government policy to a plebiscite, dissolve the National Assembly, form a government and appoint the Chief Justice and judicial officers.

I was told that on orders of Park Jung Hee some scholars of constitutions drafted the new constitution, referring mainly to the constitutions of Jiang Jieshi's presidential government and the fifth Republic of France, in order to ensure his lifelong office and that the former centralized power more than the latter on the ground that "A democratic system suited to our realities should be set up."

Both the constitution of Jiang Jieshi and that of the fifth Republic of France are ones that remind us of a constitution granted by the king in the 19th century. But the new constitution centralized power more than those, so it was not difficult to guess that President Park's authority came to be tantamount to that of an absolute monarch.

I am not a lawyer, so I cannot explain in detail. But the new constitution was framed in a way that when the Autonomous National Congress for Unification which was called the sovereign power of the people was elected, the authorities could regulate and make it up at will with their favourites. Moreover, it ensured that Park Jung Hee acted as its chairman and the National Congress alone could elect the President. This was practically the institutionalization of Park Jung Hee's lifelong office.

In this connection I still remember impressively what Han Tae Yon, an assembly man, said one day at the Taenung golf-links. He



was one of those who had taken part in the drafting of the constitution and afterwards became secretary of public hearings of the Republican Party and then acted as chairman of the policy discussing commission of the Cabinet for Yushin administration. According to him, one day Park Jung Hee heard the explanation about the draft of constitution at a place where there were only members of the committee for drafting constitution and he slapped his lap delightfully, saying "It has been achieved so easily but I have worried myself unnecessarily."

This shows clearly that with constitutional amendment he aimed at the institutionalization of his long-term office.

So on November 21, he hastily held a referendum on the draft of constitution.

Someone said that the national referendum which was held by dictators was a farce to camouflage his autocracy with the veil of "democracy." One could understand without asking the result of the referendum which was held not in time of peace but under the emergency martial law. Park Jung Hee must have felt it hard to announce 100 per cent voting and 100 per cent aye; he stated that it was "approved" by 91.9 per cent voting and 91.5 per cent aye.

On December 15 the election of deputies to the Autonomous National Congress for Unification was held. He was elected the President there on the 23rd, and taking office as the eighth President on the 27th made public the new constitution approved by the national referendum. Thus the fourth Republic came into being.

After the announcement of October 17 measures he handled the whole people so roughly that they felt dizzy and improved and strengthened the ruling system with all haste for two months.

Here we should not overlook the fact that when Park Jung Hee was strengthening the dictatorial system with all his might, the structure of cold war between the East and the West actually began to break internationally and internally dialogue between the north and the south was going to start.

In other words, in the year of 1972 alone, Nixon paid a visit to communist China in February and the Soviet Union in May, Prime Minister of Japan also visited Communist China in September and a

basic treaty was concluded between East and West Germany in December.

In addition, only six months after Li Hu Rak made a secret visit to Pyongyang on May 2, the north-south relations underwent an unbelievably great improvement and the second meeting of the co-chairmen of the North-South Coordination Commission was held early in November to make the “joint announcement” which affirmed mutual cooperation.

This showed that the north and the south which was hostile to each other even some time before executed a 180-degree turn in their attitude.

After that, the third meeting of the co-chairmen of the North-South Coordination Commission was held at the guest house in Seoul on November 30 and the North-South Coordination Commission started functioning officially, the people came to have greater expectation of peaceful reunification of the country.

Then, why did Park Jung Hee under this external and internal situation infringe upon even the joint statement and raise the whirlwind of revitalization in order to strengthen the dictatorial system?

This is incomprehensible apart from the relations between Park Jung Hee and the United States, I think.

As mentioned above, the United States’ strategy towards Korea is to turn it into its advance military base in Asia. But if the north-south dialogue made headway paving the way for peaceful reunification on the Korean peninsula, its strategy aiming at perpetuating the division of this peninsula and creating two Koreas would be shaken.

On the other hand, Park made a political calculation in his own way. He had agreed to the joint statement in order to have time for reestablishing the foothold of the dictatorship by making the most of the international situation, under the cover of fixing peaceful order.

Here the United States abetted Park and the latter outwardly clamoured under the patronage of the former about the “national reunification and prosperity” and “Yushin reform,” but internally raised the whirlwind of revitalization for the perpetuation of

division and strengthening of the base of dictatorship.

In this way, entering 1973, Pak Jung Hee, who took the road of opposing reunification and the people, announced the heinous “emergency measures” in rapid succession to oppress frantically the people who advocated for the independent peaceful reunification of the country. And at last, on June 23 he advanced a proposal on the north and the south’s simultaneous presence at the UN, actually recognizing two Koreas and opposing squarely reunification. At that time, he put up a plausible signboard of the “diplomatic declaration of peaceful reunification.”

As a result, the dawn of reunification which was brought about by the publication of the North–South Joint Statement came to be out of sight and the road to reunification was covered again by the dark clouds gathered by the whirlwind of revitalization.



# Breakaway OBJ



*Choe Dok Sin gives out a statement against Park Jung Hee*

The Revitalization system was a most brazen-faced and undisguised machinery of Park Jung Hee's dictatorship aimed at his permanent office.

However, unable to get rid of uneasiness and worries even with the Revitalization system, he unscrupulously caused one after another shocking incidents which were most immoral and depraved.

In these conditions he tried to make me, patriarch of the Chondoist faith, lose even the moral prestige in order to ostracize me and, what is more, endangered my personal security.

I had to leave again the motherland where after returning in 1946 I led an active life for 30 years, though it was involved and troublesome.

This was a great turnabout in my course of life.

I had never dreamed that this would bring me to swing to procommunist nationalism.

## Signs of an Impending Downfall

At the early stage of the Revitalization I had no eye for correct estimate of its system.

It is because, first of all, with the thought that the prosperity of Tonghak and expansion of the influence of Chondoism needed the support of the government I tried to read the Park Jung Hee's mind. This really represented a selfish idea.

What made me dismiss this shameful idea was Park Jung Hee's insanity. He frantically pursued the dictatorship and came to stick at nothing to maintain his power. The world-startling incidents including the kidnapping case of Kim Dae Jung, the incident of Mun Se Gwang and the People's Revolutionary Party case have occurred one after another.

I who was once involved in the East Berlin Incident felt a chill in the marrow of my bones whenever I was told of these heinous criminalities and even seized with fear thinking what the Park Jung Hee's insanity would cause to this country.

Among them the Kim Dae Jung incident is so well known that I

need not to make an additional remark about it. However, I have something to say in connection with myself. At the time of the presidential election in 1971 I took part in the oratorical campaign of the Republican Party and opposed Kim Dae Jung, though I did it unable to decline Park Jung Hee's request, considering the prosperity of Chondoist faith. But this matter always troubled my mind like a sort of indebtedness.

So, at the news that Mr. Kim, who had been kidnapped, returned to Seoul and was put under house arrest I phoned him to pay my compliments and simply console him.

But this does not mean that I came to share his political views. I still now disagree with him in political views but I cannot suppress my surging indignation at Park's illegal abduction of him.

The Mun Se Gwang incident is the one I witnessed on the scene of the ceremony which was held in honour of the August 15 liberation and I attended as one of the representatives of religious circles, on August 15, 1974.

My seat placed on the right side upstairs commanded an overall view of the ceremonial hall. The front row was occupied by the Home Minister and other ministers and Cho Gye Jong, head of temple office, was seated next to me as a Buddhist representative.

To tell the thing as I saw and felt that day, a man who was known later as a young Korean resident in Japan abruptly rushed forward from the back seat firing his revolver at the platform. At this moment Park Jung Hee who was reading his speech squatted down to hide himself behind the bulletproof platform and Security Chief Pak Jong Gyu who was seated in the row behind Ryuk Yong Su drew his revolver and fired off.

But, strange to say, Pak Jong Gyu failed to hit Mun Se Gwang, the completely exposed target that was approaching towards the platform.

It cannot be an accidental mistake that Pak Jong Gyu who as a well-known crack shot had an additional post of director of the South Korean Shooting Society and, moreover, was in charge of the presidential security, could not check the criminal who fired all the bullets in the magazine at the President, drawing nearer. But on the contrary, a girl student, member of the chorus that took the seat of

the opposite right side screamed and was killed and Ryuk Yong Su whose seat lay on the straight line joining the dead girl and Pak Jong Gyu was shot. Then how should this be construed? With the report of random shots she slightly leaned her body and fell down with no trace on her face.

At first I said in whispers to the head of temple office beside me that Ryuk Yong Su seemed to fall into a faint.

But, as was announced by the authorities, if Ryuk Yong Su was killed by his shots, it means that his bullets flew forming a circular arc like a guided missile to hit the back of her head. This is a sophistry which one cannot consent to.

And it is also doubtful that secretaries and security officials who were on standby behind the stage which was turned into a shambles due to this accident showed no signs of doing anything about it. The fallen Ryuk Yong Su was taken away, then Park Jung Hee resumed his speech. Until the Ryuk Yong Su's neglected rubber shoes and handbag were carried away, the secretaries and security officials did not appear at all.

Why should Ryuk Yong Su be dead?

She was disgusted with Park Jung Hee's foul debauchery and also quite tired of matrimonial quarrel. She felt repugnance to all his behaviours, got out of the Blue House and went to her parents' home in Okchon, North Chungchong Province. Park Jung Hee wheedled and placated her and brought her on the pretext of the celebration of the "August 15 liberation." Thus the incident was settled for the time being with Mun Se Gwang charged with murderer and put to death. But it is a question whether Mun Se Gwang was a true criminal. It is open to doubt how Mun Se Gwang, a young Korean resident in Japan, could safely be admitted into south Korea carrying a weapon with him and how he could without any trouble enter the ceremonial hall which the common people could not even come near and commit such a crime.

It was a clear fact shown by the incident that Park Jung Hee was not wounded at all by the firing of Mun Se Gwang, and Mun Se Gwang was not injured either by the covering fire, and that Ryuk Yong Su and a young girl student, Chang Bong Hwa, were killed by the bullets which shot at the angle largely different from that at



which Mun Se Gwang fired. It is evident that this is not a case of murder accident simply connected with blind love.

Anyhow, with the death of Ryuk Yong Su, Park Jung Hee could let down a bar to pursuit of carnal pleasure and tide over the immediate political crisis, though temporarily.

Abusing this murder case, Park Jung Hee could liquidate the aftermath of the Kim Dae Jung incident by suppressing the movement for democracy and strengthening the adhesion of south Korea and Japan.

Through this incident I was filled with astonishment and indignation at the vicious and cruel disposition of the tyrannical maniac Park Jung Hee who victimized even his wife for the security of his dictatorship.

But, neither any impact nor any conspiracy could crush the people's movement for democracy. Popular outcry for the abolition of the Revitalization system was raised in the street demonstrations and gatherings, prayer meetings and through the statements issued by various organizations, and the anti-government resistance movement grew in scale and in depth day by day, embracing various sections of people.

Under this threatening situation Park Jung Hee concocted another case of political conspiracy called the People's Revolutionary Party case.

Now I did not know what kind of people were involved in this case. I was not related to it, and did not pay special attention to it because I thought it was the left-wing case of frequent occurrence.

But, seeing that the American pastor George Ogle asserted that the accused were falsely charged and broad sections of people, to say nothing of their families, made a protest, I felt that things were serious. Those who were subjected to examination but released for lack of good evidence ten years ago received a death sentence and were sent to the scaffold at once on charge of "plotting against the government" and even their dead bodies were forcibly burnt to ashes instead of being transferred to their families for fear that evidence of torture should be revealed. How can this savagery be regarded as a natural occurrence?

It is evident that this incident was, in the long run, a malicious

political intimidation aimed at suppressing the resistance of the people.

Really Park Jung Hee perpetrated malicious violence to maintain his dictatorial power. His madness undoubtedly was signs of an impending downfall.

In these conditions, it was hardly possible that Park Jung Hee was pleased with my activities for the prosperity of Chondoist faith.

As mentioned above, the purposeful activities I devoted to extending the influence of Chondoism after taking office as patriarch came to be rewarded bit by bit. So around this time the Tonghak idea was getting popular and the young people began to show zeal for the study of it.

However, the Tonghak idea could not suit Park Jung Hee's fancy because it advocates "opposition to Westerners and Japanese," "national security and public peace," and "relief of the people."

He connived at those who opposed me in the religious order and encouraged them inwardly. A man like Choe Ik Hwan, though he was a grandson of Haewolsinsa (one of the founders of Chondoism—Tr.) even hindered me from rebuilding his grandfather's grave in Kwangju, Kyonggi Province and the head of religious affairs office Kwak Hun criticized me in connection with the question of turning Kumi and Ryongdan into holly grounds. Added to this, they even formed a gang and slandered this patriarch, and in the end came to the Suun Hall with a mob to threaten me.

I felt as if I were thrown into despair.

## I Started Again On A Wandering Journey

### *Departure from the Country with No Promise to Return Home*

Viewed in the light of this state of affairs it was obvious that the authorities intended to ostracize me.

After all they went so far as to appeal to the Seoul District Public Procurators' Office against me on the charge that I had embezzled the funds of tens of million *won* at the time of building the Suun Hall.

I felt victimized.

The prosecution made a rigorous investigation into me but they could not obtain sufficient material evidence to institute an action against me. So, at last the procurator in charge disposed of it without indicting me on the ground of insufficient evidence. He simply advised me to properly adjust the accounts in the future.

However, their moves to ostracize me did not disappear and their mudslinging continued.

My mind came to be complicated. I could not but think of the relations between me and the Park government.

After the May 16 coup d'état I supported Park Jung Hee cherishing an illusion about his influence. But in the south Korea-Japan Foreign Ministers' talks in which I attended as the Foreign Minister I was greatly disappointed at his submissive policy towards Japan which ran counter to our national spirit. I think that at that time I was mentally estranged from Park Jung Hee. Such a feeling was more deepened by the East Berlin Incident.

After that I took orders and, out of sheer desire to contribute by some means or other to the prosperity of the nation through the expansion of the influence of Chondoism, I intentionally made an effort to ignore all things and maintain good relations with him, serving even as the councillor to the Board of National Unification, president of the Revitalization Academy and director of the Anti-Communist League as was told by him.

But he blighted the prospects of national reunification by instituting the fascist Revitalization system, and, besides, threatened even my personal security by promoting factional strife in the Chondoist faith rather than neglecting it.

I made up my mind to gently retire from my office of patriarch.

I called on C who was my secretary when I was the minister. Because, at that time, he was in the secretariat of the Blue House.

He was already well aware of everything before I told him of it. At his advice I went down unnoticed to the Yusong Spa and hid myself. But the believers, though I did not know how they came to know this, called on me and told that during my absence sectarian differences were not arranged but rather assumed a critical complexion. In other words, those who opposed me were going to

hold an extraordinary congress of representatives, with holding up the “purification of the organization.” They told that Chondoism was completely split into two.

It seemed to me that they intended to make me an infamous criminal without fail.

I keenly felt that I lacked virtue and ability but I did not want to stand against them. I again visited Secretary C and laid bare my heart.

“Wherever I may go in the country, things stand with me in the same way. I do not want to live here any more. Taiwan University asked me for special lectures. I wanted to attend the south Korea–Japan religionists council to be held in Osaka in the coming February and then straightly go to Taiwan to wait and see for the time being. I cannot but inform the authorities of it, so please report it to the authorities for me.”

I was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Chinese Wen Hua Academy in Taiwan, and was its guest professor.

Secretary C rang up the Minister of Culture and Information then and there. He explained, inventing one reason or another but the other man seemed to fear something.

“I think there is no need to worry about it. He has a family and he will start alone...”

In this way, on February 17, 1976 I left the country on the pretext of attending the south Korea–Japan religionists council, with no promise to return home.

The blue waters of the South Sea that were seen through the porthole of the plane were turned into a sea of white clouds before I was aware. When I found myself above the clouds, bygone days came across my mind, wringing my heart.

Overjoyed with liberation of the country, I returned home and entered the military service to have bitter experiences due to the Kochang incident. Then, when I was in the government service, I met with the East Berlin Incident. After that I took holy orders half-heartedly. But trouble arose in the faith and at the age of over 60 I had to leave the country again... Why should I meet exclusively with failures in my life? Really, is there no place for this Choe Dok Sin to set foot in this country?... Thinking in this way, I was

overwhelmed with undescribably great grief and hot tears rolled down my cheeks incessantly.

It stuck in my mind as though it were yesterday, but already ten years passed.

At that time the KCIA director was Sin Jik Su. He planted his agent in our pulpit. He was none other than Kwak Hun whom I had entrusted with the post of head of religious affairs office, a responsible post in the orders. After all, I met with his revolt and had to flee even without going through due formalities.

Under the conditions in which there arose trouble within the Chondoist faith I, patriarch, should have called extraordinary national congress of representatives to remedy it and elected my successor before leaving the country. I think that in this connection I should make a frank confession before our orders.

I had not any country specially connected with me. So, I started in the hope of seeing my youngest brother Jong Han who went over to the United States in 1957 and settled down in Washington, but this was a sort of escape.

Thus I put another blot on my life.

### *Tokyo Statement*

I left Taiwan and arrived at the United States. I ceased to be a public official and went into retirement in a corner of Washington to spend the remainder of my life quietly.

However, it was painful to me to lead a secluded life idly and, moreover, I could not repress my resentment whenever I heard the news that Park Jung Hee was running by recourse to the tyrannical revitalization system.

One day Choe Hong Hui, the president of the International Federation of Taekwon-Do visited me. I was really pleased. "Brother! You must do something. How can you live like this all the time?"

"I'm a social scum now, then, what can I do?"

"A social scum? I must make use of even a social scum."

"What! You make use of a social scum?! Ho, ho..." I laughed

sadly.

“It does not do that we assume an indifferent attitude toward the irregularities of the south Korean authorities because we live abroad.”

“You have formed the International Federation of Taekwon-Do and are successful in your work, but I am one who has been defeated and escaped from the homeland, ain’t I?... What then can I do?”

“You should make united efforts for the overseas movement for democracy.”

“?!...”

“To tell the truth, I have come at the request of the Overseas South Koreans Federation for Democracy and National Unification (KFD) for telling you about this.”

“The request of KFD?”

At this moment I felt my heart beating fast. I was excited with astonishment and joy and my heart thumped.

I owned myself to be a shameful defeatist and recluse who was in limbo. But when I realized that there were kind men who prized me, I was deeply moved and delighted, feeling the lost worth of my life restored.

But, on the other hand, I apprehended if there was any task I could carry out for the great cause of democratization against dictatorship.

Next morning we, walking up and down the street, resumed our talk which was not finished in the previous night.

“It is very kind of you to say that this social scum is needed. But I’m anxious about what I can do.”

“If you clarify the reason why you had to break with the dictatorial government, this alone is enough to greatly contribute to the overseas democratization movement, and further, if you declare that you will give energetic cooperation in the democratization movement, it will exert an enormous influence, I think.”

“Well, that will very likely be so...but can I easily go to Tokyo?...”

“Don’t worry about the journey. Let’s go together.”

At last I made up my mind and I entrusted President Choe Hong Hui with everything. After returning to Toronto he made necessary arrangements and phoned me to start without delay. A few days later we left Toronto and arrived at the Haneda Airport on November 7, 1977 by way of Australia and Hong Kong. I was deeply impressed with many persons including Pae Dong Ho who came out to meet us at the airport.

From that day on we exchanged a lot of opinions with the officials of the KFD and discussed the future tasks and had contacts with many pressmen. Thus we spent busy yet significant days. At last the memorable time had come when I was to announce a drastic change of my course of life.

At the press conference which was held at the headquarters of the South Korean National Congress for the Restoration of Democracy and the Promotion of Unification at 2 p.m. on November 18, 1977, I denounced the national obliteration policy and traitorous military fascist rule of the Park Jung Hee regime through the written statement, and made a solemn pledge to join in the struggle for democracy and salvation of the country.

In the statement I firmly determined to take part in the movement for democracy against dictatorship and adduced the reasons why I thought the Park Jung Hee government should be upset to this effect.

I pointed out that “First, Park Jung Hee is responsible for the fact that the alliance between south Korea and the United States, its biggest ally, is on the brink of being broken up and that “secondly, Park Jung Hee is turning the country into his private property and wantonly oppresses the personal rights of the people.”

I laid bare “thirdly, Park Jung Hee’s policy towards Japan which is seriously deviated from the course our national history should follow.”

I analyzed “fourthly, Park Jung Hee’s responsibility for the impending danger of war” and established “fifthly, the stark fact that the existence of a man of power Park Jung Hee constitutes the greatest obstacle to the national reunification.”

When my statement came to an end, deafening cheers were

raised in the hall, and I was deeply moved at this. I felt the load was off my mind and I was brimming over with fresh confidence and courage.

I was much indebted to the Korean residents in Japan and Japanese democrats who gave me hospitality in every way and took care of my personal security during my ten-odd days' stay in Japan for their utmost kindness and troubles.

During our stay in Japan the south Korean youth league members were always at our side for our personal security.

During our ten-odd days' sojourn we changed our hotel thrice. Our itinerary was mapped out so scrupulously that we might leave immediately after the press conference. Prior to the official press conference, we gave more than ten reporters an opportunity to cover the statement in advance and asked them to observe secrecy until it was published. The Japanese reporters faithfully kept their promise.

I was told that the KCIA agents in Japan could not sense the secret at all. It was not until the press conference took place that they knew about it and made a great fuss summoning their operatives. But when they swarmed into the place of the press conference, I was already equipped for travel and was in the car running to the airport.

Cadres of the KFD and the youth league members were at the airport to see us off.

When I was chatting with the cadres of the KFD in the reception room of the airport, a sturdy youth league member came in and said to me: "Please, exchange farewells here and go out through the exit, Mr. Choe Dok Sin. Hooligans came in groups."

When I came out of the exit after bidding farewell, the youth league members held the hooligans in check not to allow them access to me. Unable to block my way they only raised shouts. I got through a crowd in a quiet manner and went into the waiting room of the airport. Shouts were still heard from outside. Strangers were coming and going outside the waiting room. I was strained.

At this time a customs examiner appeared and asked me to go into his office saying that he had something to inquire me about. He closely looked into my passport, turning over its leaves. It was



evident that he was going to pick a hole in me.

He was apparently unable to find out faults with my passport and asked what hotel I had stayed in. It seemed that he would not release me readily. If the plane took off while my time was taken up in this way, it would be disastrous to me.

Luckily, at this moment two Japanese reporters approached to me. They were my acquaintances whom I saw when I entered Japan. They pressed the examiner for an answer, asking, "Why do you ask it? What does it matter to you where he had stayed?" He was at a loss for a reply and could not but return the passport to me.

The two reporters followed us until we went up the steps of the plane and waved us a farewell. Really it was thankful.

President Choe Hong Hui looked at me and said with a smile, "Brother, you need not worry!" I heaved a sigh of relief and also smiled at him.

In the plane flying over the Pacific Ocean I kept recollecting with a glad heart the days that I spent with the Korean residents and democrats in Tokyo from where I had left just before.

I arrived at Toronto and found that all the newspapers carried articles under the heavy headlines "Choe Dok Sin's statement for refuge," "Determination to Take Part in the Struggle for Democracy against the Government," and so on.

Yes! The change of my course in life was already decided. All that I should do now was to advance. I felt as if I was kindled again with the passion of youth. I was happy.



## Postscript

I wrote tracing back in memory what I saw, heard and experienced for 30 years in south Korea from the time when I landed on the port of Pusan in 1946 to the publication of the Tokyo statement in 1977. And somehow I have covered all themes as I planned at first.

Originally, I have a weak hand so the important part was described roughly, while insignificant matters were dealt with at length. In a word, it can be said that this writing is a poor work. But I am not in a position to write it again, and even if I do so, there will be no improvement because I was endowed with no more ability by nature. Yet, this book somehow deals with how I had a precarious life in the south Korean society that forms a large “anti-communist swamp” until I parted with it.

This is the record of life of an ordinary man who had a dream of attaining national self-determination from the early years and wandered in search for the right path to be followed by the nation without an eye to see through the troubled times and without assuming a posture to cope with them properly. So, although I described myself as a man who lived for justice and had zeal and passion, I came to leave behind soiled record of life in which I swam with the tide with an indecent desire for fame and success in life.

It cannot but be false to have a high ambition in the conditions that there is no political climate of national independence.

While I was in even the holy orders (1967–1976), to say nothing of being in the military service (1947–1956) and government office (1956–1967) that served the dictatorial power enslaved to the foreign forces, I only played the part of prostitute for it after all.

I think that although all these insignificant and shameful stories which were interwoven with joys and sorrows and distresses might have caused disgust and boringness to you readers, you have seen

the history of harsh trials of our nation lain behind them. So, if you understand how I made the Tokyo statement which proclaimed my separation from the dictatorship, I, as an author, will be happy.

Putting down my pen right now, I have one thing that weighs on my mind. It is the question of my stand and attitude towards communism and the system of north Korea. This book made no mention of how my stand and attitude against communism and north Korea were fundamentally changed.

Not breaking from the anti-communist position that served as an amulet of self-preservation and a passport for success in life under the system of the anti-communist, pro-American dictatorship, I merely broke with the Yusin dictatorial power and found shelter in America. For this reason, in the Tokyo statement, too, no signs of fundamental change were seen in my pro-American and anti-communist position. The story unfinished in this book represents the change of my ideology and mind with which I got out of the "swamp of anti-communism" I had immersed my feet in for a long time and reached the "hill of pro-communism."

This was caused and effected through my observation of north Korea on several occasions. My visit to north Korea gave me a deep and strong impression not merely because the whole of society irrespective of any field and domain, was full of the national spirit and all members of the society, united around their leader with one mind and one purpose, were making a rapid advance in construction and creating a great history of national prosperity.

I was also deeply moved by the fact that north Korea despite the difficult geographical conditions in which it was surrounded by big powers, defended the national dignity and interests with an indomitable spirit of independence and launched into the international society in a dignified manner with dauntless attitude. And I could not but be carried away with emotion seeing their warm affection for their separated fellow countrymen and their unanimous fervent desire for national reunification.

I have no profound knowledge of the substance of the communist ideology and its system. But I can say positively that the leading cadres of north Korea are the true patriots who warmly love the national and bear the responsibility for the future of the nation and that all the north Korean compatriots earnestly desire an

independent peaceful reunification. Spending my time with them who are simple and magnanimous, I came to gain full confidence in the nation's bright future.

I came to know clearly that it was an absolute falsehood and self-deceit to talk about national reunification without joining hand with them and abandoning the anti-communist and anti-north sentiments opposed to them. Therefore, as long as he does not break away from the old ideological and spiritual world of anti-communism and anti-north, any nationalist cannot become genuine nationalist.

The bright future of our nation can be guaranteed only by pro-communism and collaboration—this is the truth and conclusion I reached passing through turns and twists in life.

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